H W Van Patten

THE
NEW YORK LEDGER
DEVOTED TO CHOICE LITERATURE ROMANCE THE NEWS AND COMMERCE

VOL. XXVIII. ROBERT BONNER, {COR. OF WILLIAM AND SPRUCE STS. SATURDAY, MAY 25, 1872. TERMS. {$3 PER ANNUM, IN ADVANCE. NO. 14.

DO YOUR BEST.

BY CALEB DUNN.

Do whatever good you can,
Show you are no grovelling man;
Dread no scorn, and fear no ban—
Do your best!

There is work for all to do;
Life 's a battle—fight it through
With a full success in view—
Do your best!

Honest toil must surely win!
Now 's the moment to begin;
Work for virtue, banish sin—
Do your best!

All around are forces grand;
Nerve your heart and wield your hand,
Till with victory you stand—
Do your best!

Halt not trembling in the way:
March! work on while it is day;
Life is labor more than play—
Do your best!

Let the carping ones deride,
Stand fast e'er by virtue 's side,
And His care your feet shall guide—
Do your best!

Men may sneer, but let them frown;
Labor lives all scoffing down,
If it strive for honor's crown—
Do your best!

THE RIVAL SISTERS.

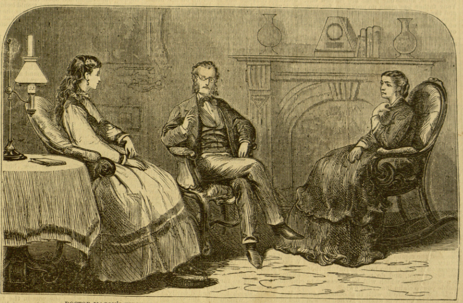
By ELIZA A. DUPUY,

AUTHOR OF THE "EVIL GENIUS," THE "WHITE TERROR," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER V.

A NEW PLOT DEVELOPED.

ENTERED ACCORDING TO ACT OF CONGRESS, IN THE YEAR 1872, BY ROBERT BONNER, IN THE OFFICE OF THE LIBRARIAN OF CONGRESS, AT WASHINGTON.



DOCTOR MACON'S FIRST VISIT TO MRS. BLAKE AND DAUGHTER AFTER THE RAILROAD CASUALTY.

As Dr. Macon drew near the cottage, he saw the light of the lamp shining from the open windows, and heard Hester singing to her mother. She was a brilliant performer on the piano, and her voice was sweet and clear-toned, though it lacked expression. There was an occasional metallic ring in it, which might have afforded a key to her nature, if he who was captivated by her charms had not been too much under her sway to detect it.

Macon softly closed the gate, and moved up the shaded pathway to the house. A small portico was in front of it, and on this he lightly stepped, that he might obtain a view of the interior. Mrs. Blake lay upon a sofa with her arm thrown upward, to shade her eyes from the light of the lamp; and Hester, in her rose-hued ribbons, sat at the piano, which was placed between the two front windows of the little parlor. The softened light which filtered through the lamp shade of ground glass fell upon her brilliant face and graceful form, and the man who looked in on her vowed anew that this adorable creature should not escape him.

Suddenly she arose, and turning to her mother, asked:

"Are you asleep, mother? I am so restless that I can play no longer. I hope you have had music enough for one evening."

Mrs. Blake indolently removed her arm, and with a strange glitter in her fathomless black eyes, replied:

"Play me a triumphal march, Hester, for something tells me that the hour I have so long yearned for approaches. I believe that I have a familiar spirit that whispers to me occasionally, foreshadowing that which is soon to come to pass. The negroes with whom I associated when a child had many superstitions, and in spite of my education, I am not entirely free from them. I believe that I shall soon have as good cause to sing a song of triumph as Deborah had, when she rejoiced over the doom of Sisera."

Hester lightly replied, as she resumed her seat at the piano and struck into a brilliant march:

"I think you would have little cause to rejoice if such a fate overtook *mon père* before *my* claims upon him are definitely settled."

Macon distinctly heard the words of both, and he smiled as he thought how unconscious the speakers were of the hold he had gained over them in the last few hours. He was bringing to the woman the tidings which would confirm her premonitions, and to the girl he had but one alternative to offer—your hand as my wife, or disgrace to your mother.

He had grown very pale while this train of thought passed through his mind, and he stood quite still, trying to regain perfect self-possession before he made his presence known.

Hester arose, approached the window, and said:

"It grows late, and I fear that Dr. Macon will not come out to-night. I wanted so much to hear about those unfortunate people that were hurt on the train this afternoon. I suppose he was so much occupied that he found it impossible to get away."

"I would find time to visit *you* under any circumstances, Miss Hester," said Macon, advancing toward the window, "and I am here to tell you much more than you expect to hear."

She uttered a little shriek, and cried out:

"How you startled me! How long have you been out there, Dr. Macon? It is hardly fair to advance on one in so stealthy a manner."

"Pardon me, my fairest, if I have done wrong in pausing a few moments to listen to the stirring strain you played so deftly. Your touch is exquisite, and I am particularly fond of martial music."

"Yes—as most non-combatants are," she replied, with a slight sneer. "Pray come in, but not through the window. The hall door is open, and I am dying to hear all the news about those poor people."

He detected the scorn in her voice, and significantly replied:

"In spite of your implied contempt for non-combatants, they sometimes fight a successful battle."

"I hope you have not come here with the intention of taking up the cudgels in defence of your order, Doctor. At any rate, pray lay aside your belligerent intentions till you have told me the news. The monotony of our life is such that even something horrible is welcome as a variety."

"To hear is to obey, my divinity," was the response, made with a degree of familiarity he had never ventured on before, and Hester, who was quick-witted as he was, thought:

"He has found out something that concerns us. He may have written to our old home, and heard the rumors against my mother. If the man was not so madly in love with me, I should be alarmed; as it is, I shall prove more than a match for him, in spite of all he can do."

By this time Macon was in the room, and Mrs. Blake arose from her recumbent position, looking paler than he had ever seen her, but quite composed. She said:

"Hester had almost given you up, Doctor; but I felt certain that you would be here before the evening was over. My daughter has wiled away the time with music, which is one of the few enjoyments of my life. I have been very nervous to-night; but as David calmed Saul, she has spoken peace to me through her skillful fingers."

She motioned him to a seat on the sofa, and after taking it he glanced curiously from mother to daughter, and said:

"You seem very fond of the old Hebrew narratives, Mrs. Blake. What do you think of the story of Hagar? By the way, I believe that is your own name."

She raised her eyes to his with a defiant expression, and said:

"Yes, my name is Hagar, and I was named after the mother of that man whose hand was raised against that of every other one. I have thought a great deal about the fate of my namesake, and I think she could hardly have evaded the decree that sent her forth into the desert. But God had mercy upon her, and He sent His angel to minister to her and her son in their dire extremity."

Before he could reply, Hester imperiously said:

"This is no time to discuss the Ishmaelite—*that* can come afterward, if it is absolutely necessary. Tell me about the people that were wounded by that railroad accident; were any of them killed? For a little while my mother feared that a friend we are expecting was on the train, but luckily a letter came that set her mind at rest."

"No one was killed; about twenty persons were bruised and scratched, and there was a few broken limbs. But two of the passengers were dangerously hurt: one of them will die; the other may recover, but she is suffering from concussion of the brain. My skill may bring her through, but it will be a hard struggle, I am afraid."

"Oh, you doctors always exaggerate the danger, that you may have greater credit for the cure," said Hester lightly. "I am sorry for the poor man. Did you find out his name, and that of the lady?"

"Yes; he told me his name, and the young girl is his daughter. Hester, when I looked on her, I could almost have sworn that she is your twin sister."

A cry of sharp and sudden pain issued from the lips of Mrs. Blake, and she gasped:

"You have been sent hither to summon us to the death-bed of the friend we were expecting. How came he on that train, when he wrote to me that he would not leave Cape May till to-morrow?"

"Mr. Landry told me that he was on his way to New York with his daughter, intending to leave her there and return here, when he was arrested in this fearful manner. He spoke of your daughter, Mrs. Blake, and expressed a strong desire to see and speak with her; but he expressly said that *you* were not on any account to be permitted to approach him. I came hither to prepare Hester to go to him at as early an hour to-morrow morning as possible."

Mrs. Blake turned fiercely upon him, and asked:

"Did he tell you *why* he wished to see Hester? Did he tell you—"

Her voice died away suddenly, as if all power of articulation had failed.

Macon felt that he was master of the field, and he coolly said:

"Mr. Landry told me nothing, save that Miss Blake is nearly related to him, and has claims on him for a provision that has not yet been made. His trunk, containing the settlement he had prepared for her, was destroyed by the burning of the baggage car, and he wishes to see her, that he may explain to her what his intentions were. His daughter, he says, will literally carry them out, as soon as she is in a condition to understand them. Mr. Landry explained nothing to me, but he was at times delirious, and he said some strange things about you, Mrs. Blake. I am shrewd enough to put things together, and I believe that I fully understand the relation in which you once stood to him, and the origin of his solicitude concerning Hester."

The two women listened to him with paling cheeks and panting breath. The secret they had thought so safe was his, and the first questions that occurred to them were, what use would he make of it, and how far did his knowledge extend.

Hester accepted the challenge he had thrown down, and she presently spoke as coolly as he had done:

"If I had consented to become your wife, Dr. Macon, the fact that I am the daughter of Mr. Landry would not have been concealed from you. I am his eldest child, and I possess a legal claim upon his fortune; let that suffice, as it sufficiently explains our position. It is of the last importance to me that I shall know what provision he designed making for me, and I am ready to go with you at any moment; to-night, if you think it advisable."

Macon admired and appreciated the self-possession that sustained her in such a moment; he recognized in it something kindred to himself, and he took her hand and pressed it tenderly, as he said:

"You have the courage of a heroine, Hester, for you have not flinched from speaking the truth, painful as it must have been to you. What I have learned to-day makes no difference in my feelings toward you. I love you deeply, truly as ever, and whether Mr. Landry endows you with fortune or not, you will still be the one being in the world that my heart asks as the companion of my life. It is not necessary for you to go to your father to-night, for he will be under the influence of an opiate. In the morning his mind will be clear, and he will then settle what is to be done for you. I came hither for my answer, and I again ask you to become my wife."

She had partially withdrawn her hand from him. In spite of the earnest and disinterested passion he thus avowed for her, there was a feeling of repulsion in her heart that she could not control; but when she looked into his eyes there was in them an expression which told her that her mother was at his mercy, and that there would be no safety for her if she refused the hand he offered her.

"I will gain time," she thought. "I will 'fool him to the top of his bent,' and then see who will come out winner in the desperate game we are playing."

She laid the hand she had taken from him upon his own, and its touch thrilled through every nerve; she looked up into his face with eyes suffused with tears, and softly said:

"Hitherto I have not appreciated you as you deserve. If you were not the most generous of men, you would shrink from marrying me, now that you know my mother's secret. The depth, the truth, the fervor of the love you have offered me was never sounded before this night; and now I feel for the first time how important it may become to me. I will return it—I promise you that; but you must give me time. Hitherto I have played with love, but I have not seriously thought of it."

"Yet you have allowed me to devote myself to you for two years, Hester. That probation should be long enough to prove the worth of my affection, and if you have yet to learn to love me, the lesson can be best conned after you are my own cherished and darling wife."

He spoke with a fire and earnestness she had not believed in his nature, and for the moment she was touched by it; but she shrank as much as ever from the thought of an immediate union with him. How to escape it, and yet hold him in the sweet bondage to which he had so long yielded, was the problem she had to solve; but her mother came to the rescue at that moment by saying, in a strange, hard voice:

"An early union between yourself and my daughter is not advisable, Dr. Macon; though in a few months she can become your wife under such brilliant auspices as will amply repay you for the delay. I will pledge you my word to this, if you will both listen to and be guided by me. Hester Landry, with half a million for her fortune, will be better worth winning than Hester Blake with a few thousands. If I have read you aright, you are not the man to refuse your assistance in elevating the girl of your choice to the position which of right belongs to her, as the eldest daughter of her father's house."

Macon peered at her through his spectacles, marvelling what her meaning could be, but shrewd enough to understand that she would not have spoken thus, had not some feasible plan of action occurred to her through which the interests of her daughter were to be served. Mrs. Blake had judged him correctly enough if she believed that no scruples of honor or conscience would stand in the way of perfect concert of action with herself and her daughter, if anything was to be gained to the latter in the character of his affianced wife. She was a woman who thought quickly and acted promptly; and while that little scene was enacting between the two young people, she had rapidly revolved the condition of affairs with Mr. Landry and his daughter, and conceived a plan of action worthy of her subtle brain and imbittered heart.

Macon, after weighing her words a moment, said:

"I am not likely to stand in the way of Hester's aggrandizement, Mrs. Blake. Make clear to me the thought that is in your mind, and let her make it equally clear to me that, as the husband of her choice, I am to share the prosperity you refer to, and I will go with you, heart and hand. How absorbing and powerful is the passion with which Hester has inspired me, I think I have conclusively proved to-night. You may trust me to serve her in every possible manner, if you will only prove to me that I may place equal trust in you."

Mrs. Blake exchanged a rapid glance with her daughter, which said:

"We must make him ours at all hazards, or he will turn against us."

Macon had again taken the hand of Hester in his own, and Mrs. Blake pressed her own long and slender fingers over them as she impressively said:

"I thus sanction the bond between you, and I pledge my word, my son, that within a few months Hester shall become your wife, if you will aid me to accomplish that to which I clearly see my way."

"And I," said Hester, with her softest smile, "give you the assurance that in that time I will learn to love you as you deserve. My heart is deeply touched by what has passed here to-night, and I feel that I have not hitherto done justice to the strength and purity of your affection for me."

She laid her head confidingly upon his bosom, bringing her lips in such tempting proximity to his own that he could do no less than kiss them. Hers returned the pressure, and elevated into a heaven of bliss by this concession on the part of his wily charmer, Macon said:

"I have placed the seal upon my promise, and now I am ready to listen to such developments as you wish to make, Mrs. Blake."

"I have much to say," she replied, "and we had better sit down and consult soberly together; for what we will have to do must be duly weighed and perfectly understood before a step is taken. Hester, first go to Mrs. Müller's room and ascertain if she and her husband are safely asleep, for we must have no eavesdroppers; and you, Doctor, go out and take a look through the yard. What I have to say must reach no human ears but those for which it is intended."

Dr. Macon understood that as well as she did herself, for he was keen enough to comprehend something of the plot she was about to reveal to him. He went out, made a circuit of the house, and returned with the report that all was safe so far as outsiders were concerned.

A minute later Hester came in laughing, and said:

"Müller and his wife are snoring in concert, and such a chorus as they are keeping up is not often heard. The key was on the outside of their door, and I softly turned it. Don't let me forget to unlock it again before we retire, mother."

"I shall remember. And now I am ready to explain the plan to which I referred just now."

She signed to Macon to resume the seat beside her on the sofa, and Hester drew up an ottoman in front of her and placed herself upon it.

After a brief pause, Mrs. Blake began:

"You can divine my antecedents, Doctor, so I will not dwell upon them. At a future day, Hester shall tell you all that I have suffered, and prove to you that I have the right to avenge myself upon the man from whom you came to-night. If I understood you rightly, there is no hope of his recovery from the injuries he has received?"

"None, madam. He will die within thirty-six hours from this time; possibly sooner than that. No skill can save him."

"And the daughter? She will live, but in a state of semi-idiocy—is it not so?"

"Her skull is injured, and she is suffering from congestion of the brain; but in time she *may*, and probably will, regain complete control of her mind again."

"That is, if we *permit her to do so*," said Mrs. Blake, almost in a whisper, with her glistening eyes fixed firmly upon those of the man she was tempting. He shivered and changed color, but he only bowed his head in reply. The fascinating power of the rattlesnake seemed to dwell in those rayless eyes, and cool as Dr. Macon usually was, he felt as if spellbound by them.

"I see you understand me," she went on. "And now to develop my plan to give my own child the place of which she has been unjustly defrauded. The resemblance between her and Estelle Landry is perfect, as you have yourself seen. What is to prevent my daughter from assuming the position of her half-sister, while the sick girl is left with me, to be guarded and taken care of? I shall be called on to make a heavy sacrifice in giving up my child, but I am ready to do even that, if I can give her her birthright as the eldest born of Armand Landry."

"It will be easy enough of accomplishment, Mrs. Blake, provided Hester can successfully play the part of her sister," said Macon, after a few moments' thought. "You are a very clever woman, I must say, but we are venturing on dangerous ground, and if the imposition were detected, we should all three fare very badly."

"It would not be even suspected as long as we are true to each other," she said, a little impatiently. "The childhood of Hester was passed on the plantation, and all the people there are as familiar to her recollection as to that of her sister. Estelle has spent nearly the whole of her life in Newport, with her aunt, and the friends of her family in the South are not likely to distinguish between the two sisters. I have no fears as to my daughter playing the part assigned to her with perfect success."

"I have no doubt myself on that score, Mrs. Blake; but there are many chances to consider. There is the aunt to be hoodwinked, and Mr. Landry spoke once of a younger daughter, and expressed his *satisfaction* that he had resisted her entreaties to accompany him to Cape May. Is there not danger, indeed, that they may come hither when they hear of the accident? If they do, the thing you propose will be impossible to accomplish."

"Yes, if they come; but they will not do that. I have kept myself well informed of everything concerning the Landry family, and I know that with nerve, we can do what I wish. Mrs. Murray is an invalid, confined almost constantly to her sofa, and a railroad journey would be almost fatal to her, or indeed a journey of any other kind. Clarice, the younger daughter, is a child of twelve, and after a long separation from her sister, she would not be apt to distinguish between the two, and it can be arranged so that a meeting shall not soon take place."

"But how is that separation to be accomplished, madam? Mrs. Murray will naturally expect her niece to return to her after her father's death, and if she does not do so, suspicion of something wrong may arise."

"How very cautious you are," said Mrs. Blake, with a smile that had something of disdain in it; "but you are perfectly right to examine the ground on which we stand, and ascertain if it is safe footing in every respect. I think I can convince you of that, and silence all your doubts. As the physician of Mr. Landry, you must send a note to Mrs. Murray by the morning mail, stating to her that his injuries are unimportant; that his daughter, though stunned and bruised, is in attendance upon him, and it is his wish that she will not trouble herself to send any one to him. A similar report must be sent to Mrs. Mary Spencer, in Boston, the lady that I am sure Mr. Landry and his daughter were about to visit. The fears of those who are interested in him will thus be set at rest, and no one will come here to interfere with us."

"But Mr. Landry must die, and then his friends will inquire into the deception practiced upon them as to his condition, and probably discover all."

"Yes—he must die; and if he did not, all our schemes would come to naught. As Miss Landry, Hester shall take his remains to Louisiana, to be consigned to the family vault; and after all her arrangements are completed, she can write to her father's friends in the character of her sister, stating that it was his last request that she should go with him herself, and see him placed beside her mother. Of course she will promise to return as soon as that solemn duty is performed; but she will be able to find many excuses for not keeping her word."

"But the people at the farm—how are we to deceive Brown and his wife?"

"I have thought of that too, and really, fate seems to play into our hands. Mr. Brown has sold his place, and this very week he and his wife were to have set out West, to join a son who lives in Ohio. The man who purchased the farm does not intend to take possession immediately, and I am sure that he will be glad to have a tenant in myself, till he does so. I will leave my own home, and go out there to take charge of Estelle Landry. With your assistance, the plan can be carried into effect, and the sick girl be left with me as my own daughter, suddenly stricken down by dangerous illness."

"It seems feasible enough," said Macon slowly; "and I admit that it is a great temptation. If I can serve my dear girl here, and effectually screen her from the results of discovery, I am quite ready to act with you."

"There is no doubt that you can do so," replied Mrs. Blake, rather impatiently; "and as to the service, you do not yet understand its extent and importance. Mr. Landry's children are very wealthy. They are the owners of two large sugar plantations, on which are at least five hundred slaves. Their income for a single year would be considered a fortune here, and the half of all this Hester will claim, and share with you after she is firmly settled in her new position."

Hester had listened to the conversation in silence, but she was not the less keenly interested; and the vision of sudden wealth that seemed so easy of attainment had many charms for her, even if it must be shared with Dr. Macon. No pity for that helpless sister who was to be given over to the tender mercies of her mother, arose in her heart. She was as destitute of feeling as she was of principle, and she now lifted her dark eyes to the face of her lover, and nestling her hand in his, softly said:

"With your aid, Julian, we can do what my mother wishes, and for my sake you will not refuse."

It was the first time she had ever called him by his first name, and in a transport of joy and gratitude, he raised the fair hand to his lips, and tenderly said:

"I would risk a great deal for your sake, Hester; and with care, I think this thing can be done without danger to any of us. Only give your love to me as my reward, and I shall feel amply paid for any assistance I may render."

"How can I help loving the man who will enable me to emerge from the obscure destiny which so lately seemed my lot in life? When I am acknowledged and accepted by others as my father's heiress, you may claim my hand, and with it will go my heart. You will help me to manage the large estate that must fall to me, and together we will enjoy the prosperity you will aid me to win."

"And you will be true to me, Hester? You will not suffer your thoughts to wander to any other than your plighted husband? I think I should do something desperate if such a thing as that happened."

"Why should you conjure up such fancies, Julian? Whom could I love as truly and sincerely as the man who has proved himself my best friend—who gives me wealth, the place in my father's house from which I have been so long excluded—and above all, who loves me well enough to make me his wife in spite of—of what you have evidently learned from my father's delirious ravings. My mother was divorced from him—let that suffice; he allowed her a fair income on the condition that she and I should live far away from him."

"My dearest one, never refer to those things again, I entreat. You are beautiful, brilliant, fascinating to me beyond all other creatures, and I have found no other woman who is your peer. To rise in the world was my only ambition till I met with you. Now I have but one wish, and that is, to win you to love me even as I love you."

"That consummation will be speedily attained," she said, with her most entrancing smile, "for I should be less than woman if I did not fully respond to the generous affection you proffer me. My coldness, my coquetry, are vanquished, Julian, by the power of the great passion I only now begin to comprehend. I am yours to claim whenever the time comes in which it will be prudent for us to unite our destinies."

Her lover stooped forward and kissed her on brow and lips, murmuring his thanks and his rapture.

Mrs. Blake had risen and walked away to the window while this communion went on; but she now turned sharply around, and said:

"It grows very late, and it is time for you to go, Dr. Macon. I would not have the people of the village commenting on the hour of your return from my house. Before you leave, however, we must settle what is to be done to-morrow."

He arose himself at this, and promptly replied:

"I shall come hither at six o'clock in the morning, in my carriage, to take Hester to see her father. She can remain there as his nurse, and you can follow her at your own convenience. But what will you do with your servants, madam; and how are you to get along at the Brown Farm without help, after the old man and his wife leave?"

"I can easily arrange all that. Müller and his wife will stay here in charge of the place. There is a dumb orphan girl to whom Hester has been very kind, living not far from here with a family of relations, who will be glad to get her a good place. She has often entreated me to take her as my daughter's maid, but we could not afford such a luxury as that. Eunice Barker is a competent cook and house-servant, and she will be faithful to us to the death. Her infirmity will prevent her from gossiping with others, and with her to assist me in my housekeeping, I can get along very well. She will come to me, I know, at a moment's warning."

Macon regarded her with intense admiration.

"Upon my word, you are a wonderful woman, Mrs. Blake. You can plan and make ready to execute as promptly as Napoleon on the eve of one of his great battles. The one we have to fight is quite as important to us as Waterloo was to him, but with you as the leader, I hardly think we shall meet the fate of the great Captain."

"*We* shall have no traitors in the camp to betray us to defeat and shame," she replied. "We will be true to each other, and by acting in concert we must secure the prize for which we contend."

"I shall go with you heart and hand," said Macon, offering the latter as he spoke. "I shall come for Hester at the hour I named; but after taking her to Mr. Landry, I will return here and assist you to remove to the farm with your new attendant. Of course you must claim these strangers as relatives, to account for your interest in them; but in what degree of relationship are they to stand to you?"

"They are of my daughter's blood, not mine, and for the time being, Mr. Landry can pass as her uncle. That degree of kindred will account for the likeness between the two girls."

"You think of everything, Madam. With such a coadjutor, I begin to believe that defeat will be impossible."

"If defeat comes to us, it will be through treachery practised among ourselves. I am not afraid of it on your side, for you are as much interested in our success as we are; and my daughter and I are not likely to be false to the friend who will aid us to place her in the position that of right belongs to her, as her father's eldest child."

"And one which she will fill with grace, and honor to herself and all connected with her," said Macon, with enthusiasm.

"The less that is said about *honor* the better," said Hester, with a cynical smile. "We only go in for success, and we can only win that by being true to each other. Besides," she added, assuming an expression of captivating sweetness as she looked at her lover, "self-interest is not the only tie that binds us together. We are united by a bond strong as death—lasting as life itself. Is it not so, Julian?"

Macon passionately answered, as he folded her unresisting form in his arms:

"I am yours, to do or dare all for your sake."

CHAPTER VI.

MRS. MULLER COUNTS HERSELF IN.

When Macon at last tore himself away, Mrs. Blake turned to her daughter and quietly said:

"Go now and unlock the door of Mrs. Müller's room, Hester. That must not be forgotten, for they would think it very strange if they found themselves fastened in in the morning."

The daughter was standing by the open window, vaguely looking out into the darkness. She turned at the words, but all the light had gone out of her face, and it was almost savage in its sternness as she confronted her mother.

"I will go and attend to that at once. I had forgotten all about them, and no wonder, after what I have passed through in the last hour."

Mrs. Blake regarded her with a faint expression of compassion, but she only said:

"Don't be a fool, Hester. Go and do as I bid you; then come to me in my own room, and we can talk over what has happened to-night."

Hester went out as she was bidden, and Mrs. Blake closed the windows and locked the front door while she was away. She then took up the lamp, and together they entered her chamber, which was on the other side of the hall. Hester's bedroom opened from it, and access to it was only gained through the larger apartment.

Mrs. Blake placed the lamp upon the dressing-stand, and turning to her daughter, caressingly said:

"My darling, why is your brow so clouded, and your manner so changed since our visitor left us? You played into my hands so deftly to-night that I thought you had quite made up your mind to the sacrifice that is necessary to be made."

Hester threw herself upon a wide chintz-covered sofa that stood on one side of the apartment, and moodily replied:

"I did all that was left to me; that man has us in his power I saw clearly enough, and nothing was left me but to conciliate him. He loves me with a sort of wild passion which will lead him to do anything to secure me; but he is cruel as death, and he could be revengeful as a demon if I attempted to play him false now. What could I do but speak fair to him? But I loathe him to that degree that I am almost tempted to give up all that you are scheming to win for me, if it is to be shared with him."

Mrs. Blake sat down beside her, and took her passive hand in her own, caressing it softly. She presently said:

"It is better for a woman to be fervently loved by the man she marries, than to be deeply attached to him herself. Power lies in the hands of the most loved, and you will like to exercise that over the man you marry. Dr. Macon is not your ideal, but he is something better for our purposes. Think what he will accomplish for you! and how insecure your position is, unless our plans are carried out. Your father has made no provision for you, and the income I have been allowed dies with him. We shall be left paupers, at the mercy of his daughter, if we permit her to claim her own."

Hester wearily drew her hand away, and said:

"I know all you can tell me about that. I acted in concert with you to-night, because there was nothing left for me but that; but I almost feel as if it will be better to trust to the generosity of my sister in carrying out my father's wishes, than to marry that man. If my father's mind is clear to-morrow morning, he can make a will, leaving me enough to enable us to live in Europe, and then we should care very little what Dr. Macon might tell concerning us."

With an accent of bitter contempt, her mother replied:

"I thought you had more spirit than that, Hester. Mr. Landry is in such a condition that any will he might make could be disputed. His daughter is too ill to understand his wishes; and in making them known, we may incur the charge of making false statements to sustain our own interests. If you throw off Dr. Macon now, *he* will not come forward as evidence in our favor. We should have nothing to rely on but our own unsupported assertions, and you would speedily find that they would not be of much worth in the estimation of Armand Landry's executors. Besides, under the most favorable circumstances, your father could not give you more than a pittance from the vast wealth he controls. The estates belong to his children, not to him. He might enable us to live obscurely in Europe, but you were not formed for that, my darling, nor would you be happy unless you possessed the means to gratify your taste for luxury. With the half of his fortune in your possession, think of the brilliant future that lies before you, and do not weakly shrink from the sacrifice which will be necessary to enable you to claim it as your own."

"If I must share it with that odious man, there will be no joy in wealth. When he held me in his arms and kissed me to-night, I felt as if I could strike him to the heart."

There was a passionate quiver in her voice that went to the listener's heart, for she loved this one creature in the world as the tigress loves her young; but she rebukingly said:

"Such words from you surprise me, Hester, after all the encouragement you have given Dr. Macon in the last two years. I had no idea that you felt such repulsion toward him, or I would not have placed both you and myself so completely in his power. After what has passed to-night, there is nothing left for us but to carry out the plans we agreed on. He would betray and ruin us, if we attempted to play him false."

"I know that, and that is why I hate him so! It is true that I have let him dance attendance upon me for a long time, but how could I help it? He *would* devote himself to me; and I found him of use too, in many ways. I only meant to flirt with him till a more eligible person came along, but I never thought of marrying him. What is there in him, with his pale blue eyes, that can see nothing without the aid of glasses, and his tow-colored whiskers, to attract a young girl? I am beautiful enough to fascinate better men than Dr. Macon, and it is a cruel fate that affords me no alternative but to give him my hand and fortune, or to relinquish all expectation of gaining the last."

"There is a great deal in him that you do not seem to appreciate," said Mrs. Blake, gravely. "Is it nothing to be adored as a sort of divinity? to be cherished as the most precious of all earthly creatures, by a man capable of doing what Julian proposes to do for you? He runs the same risk that we do, and he does it for your sake, you ungrateful girl."

"Umph! Don't you suppose that he has an eye to his own advantage too? If I am to become his wife, he will profit as much by Estelle Landry's thousands, as I shall."

"That may be true, but he would take you all the same without them; I am quite sure of that. And what other man, knowing what he evidently does, would have spoken as he did to you to-night, before I developed to him the scheme that had darted across my mind as easy of accomplishment. If he had not thus shown how infatuated he is with you, I should never have dared to take him into my confidence as I have done."

Hester moodily said:

"I am almost sorry that you did so, for now there is no alternative, I suppose, but utter ruin and exposure or Dr. Macon as my lord and master. Pah! The very thought of him in that character is detestable to me! If I am compelled to marry him at last, I will lose no time in breaking his heart, for I really believe the fool has such a thing about him, hard and practical as he seems."

"You are in an impracticable humor to-night, Hester, and you are excited by the novel position in which you find yourself placed. It will be best for you to retire now, and calmly think over what you may gain or lose by your ultimate decision concerning this matter. I shall not insist on compliance on your part, though I did suppose, from your conduct this evening, that you had chosen the path you would walk in, and would not falter in pursuing it. Good-night. After you have seen Mr. Landry to-morrow, you may be more anxious to accede to my plans than you now seem to be."

Hester arose, and lightly touching her mother's forehead with her lips, coldly said:

"It will be as well to allow me opportunity for thought. After I have seen my father, it will be time enough to decide on what I will finally do. He may be liberal enough to induce me to spare my sister, and save her from such tender mercies as she would be likely to receive at your hands. If he is not, the blame of what may hereafter happen may lie at his door."

Mrs. Blake's eyes flashed, and a dangerous light came into them, as she said:

"You think nothing of *me*, and *my* wrongs, or you would cheerfully aid me to bring home this retribution to the man who deserted me for that girl's mother. Who is *she*, that she should be set so far above you, and you the eldest born too! Hester, if you elect to give up the brilliant prospects opening before you, and at the same time snatch from me the fruition of my long-hoarded desire for vengeance, I hardly think that I can find it in my heart to forgive you. There; go—leave me—we have said enough, and more than enough for to-night. I shall not sleep through its long hours, but you will, for you are young, and—and careless of what others may feel or suffer."

Without making any reply, the girl went into her own room, and after lighting the lamp that stood on a table, closed the door of communication, though she was in the habit of sleeping with it open.

She wished to be entirely alone, that she might think over all that had passed that evening, and try to make up her mind to the course she would ultimately pursue.

If Dr. Macon had not thrust himself into her mother's schemes, Hester would heartily have embraced them, and labored with her to carry them into effect; for she had an eager desire for great wealth, and no scruples as to the means to be used in its acquisition. But the fatal necessity of sharing her prosperity with Macon took from her all joy in the prospect of winning it. Money was desirable, however obtained; but Dr. Macon *was not*, and she balanced the two against each other till she was weary and heart-sick over her own indecision.

"After all, the final decision must be made after I know what my father will do for me," she at length muttered; "so what is the use of worrying myself in this way? Ah, if he only knew how much depends on his liberality, he would open his heart and endow me with wealth enough to save me from this temptation, and that poor girl from the fate that menaces her."

Thus communing with herself, she at last fell into a restless slumber, in which she dreamed that she was hovering on the brink of a volcano, into which Dr. Macon was endeavoring to thrust her, while he cried out, "False demon, I know you now, and I will pay you back for all your treacherous wiles. Go down to the bottomless pit, and pay the penalty of your crimes."

She awoke bathed in perspiration, and trembling in every nerve. But when she found that it was only a dream, her self-possession returned, and she contemptuously thought:

"I shall prove more than a match for you in every way, *mon chèr* Doctor. I am not afraid of you when I have my senses about me; but if I am forced to give myself to you, I shall make you terribly afraid of *me*. I feel that this is the turning-point in my destiny: the little that is good in me will perish utterly if I accept the counsels of my mother; yet it may be, that to secure myself, no other course will be open to me."

While thinking thus she fell into a deep sleep, which lasted till the voice of her mother aroused her, and she unclosed her eyes to see that the sun was shining through the window shutter Mrs. Blake had partly opened.

"It is five o'clock," she said, "and Dr. Macon will be here at six. Mrs. Müller will have breakfast ready in half an hour, and I will leave you to prepare for it."

Hester sprang up, invigorated by the perfect rest she had enjoyed within the last few hours; she felt strong for the ordeal that awaited her, and with all her native brightness, she said:

"Good-morning, *Madame mère*; you look as if you have passed a wretched night. I am afraid it was partly my fault, but you may trust me to protect our interests in the interview to which I am going. Sleep has cleared my mind, and I will have money, and plenty of it, if I am tempted to condone your wrongs. What is mine will be yours, you know; and with a cool hundred thousand we may shake off our incubus, and find something worth living for in lands so far away from this that your story could never follow us."

Mrs. Blake shook her head drearily. She did indeed look wretchedly; she was sallow and wan, with deep circles around her eyes, and her lips closed firmly, as if resolute that no further remonstrance should issue from them. If Hester decided on acting with her, and evil should come of it, she should not be able to turn on her and reproach her for the part she had taken in thrusting her into the false position she might find herself unable to maintain. Of her own volition, Hester should decide the momentous question in which both were so deeply concerned, so she replied, with tranquil coolness:

"It is your own affair, Hester, and you must choose your own path. I shall be the loser either way: the retribution I have planned must be given up on one hand; on the other, I lose my child, for I should never dare to approach you after you assume the character of Armand Landry's heiress, lest suspicion should arise as to our true relations. When I attempt to realize that separation I waver myself, for you are all that I have."

"As to that, our separation need only be temporary. I shall, in either event, live in Europe in the future, and you could join me there in a few months, bringing with you *my double*, whom we could dispose of in a *Maison de Santé*. I have thought it all over, and settled my plans in the event of my father refusing to give me such a dower as I think myself entitled to."

Her tone was hard and calculating, and her mother knew that the reflections of the night had disposed her to look more favorably on her plans, though she evidently still held to the hope that her father's liberality would enable her to escape from the lover who was so odious to her.

In a dull tone, Mrs. Blake said:

"That would be a good arrangement, for I have been puzzled to know what I should do with the girl after she falls into my power. I have no wish to deal with her as I did with her mother, for *she* has done me no injury; but for your safety she can never be permitted to enter the world again. Her mind must never be permitted to regain its clearness, and a private mad-house in a foreign land would be so secure an asylum that there could be no fears of discovery. You are cleverer than I thought you, Hester, and I am pleased that you fixed on the only plan which will enable me to be near you without compromising our secret."

"Did you think that I would be willing to sever myself from you, *Madame mère*, and leave to you the dreary guardianship of a demented girl who is nothing to you, yet over whose fate you must affect to mourn, because the world must be cheated into the belief that she is your own unfortunate child? Think better of me than that, for if I accept fortune at the hands of my father, it will be to save you from that, as much as to save myself from Dr. Macon."

With sudden fire, Mrs. Blake said:

"Don't think of me with reference to that. I am willing to bear the penalty of what I have myself advised, be it what it may, if I can see you occupying the place of Ellinor Russell's daughter. To cast *her* out is as sweet to me as the thought that I shall give her fortune, her luxury, to you. Give me this vengeance on the child of my rival, and I shall love you better than I ever have done. Yet what am I saying? I had determined not to influence you in any way, after what passed between us last night."

Hester quietly said:

"I understand perfectly what you wish, so it is useless to multiply words. I shall consult my interests more than my feelings in this affair, and if they command me to tolerate Dr. Macon and affect to return his devotion, I shall do it with so good a grace that he will be in the seventh heaven of happiness till—*after we are married*. Then, I fancy, he will find out that he had better have passed by on the other side, and left me to work out the problem of my fate without any assistance from him."

The mother silently regarded her a few moments, and then left the room.

Hester made a very careful toilet, and she was glad to see that the brilliancy of her beauty had suffered nothing from the restlessness of the past night. She looked radiant, and no one could have suspected that she was preparing to go to the death-bed of her father. If she had questioned her own heart concerning her feelings toward him, she would have found there nothing more than a faint emotion of compassion for his untoward fate. Filial love for him she would have regarded as a wrong to her mother, but there was too little tenderness in her nature to enable her to respond to this sudden call on her affections, even if it had been made under less humiliating circumstances.

The man to whom she was going was simply the arbiter of her destiny, and as such, for the time being, he was more important to her than if he had proved himself the tenderest of parents. On his liberality hung not only her fate, but that of the daughter he had loved and cherished, as worthy to be acknowledge before the world as his child; while *she* had been banished to an obscure northern village, and never allowed to approach him in any way.

This thought filled her mind with resentment now, and she viewed with complacency the chance that opened to her a way to usurp that petted daughter's place, and give to her, the banished one, the proud position, the boundless wealth, which of right belonged to the sister whose identity she would assume. How brilliant her future might be, if she could only rid herself of her importunate lover! And almost unconsciously she began to speculate on the chances of doing so, in such a manner as effectually to silence all interference on his part, when the time drew near in which she would no longer need his services. That he would insist on the fulfilment of her pledges she well knew; and if she placed herself in his power by accepting at his hands the service he alone could render her in the present crisis of her destiny, she must pay the price, or—

Well, if he chose to tempt his fate, what then? Once embarked upon the path of deceit and crime, what restraint would hold her back from sounding its depths? It is the first step that costs; and having taken that first step, why should not all the rest naturally follow?

These were dreadful thoughts to pass through a young girl's mind, but her training had not been such as to show her all their turpitude. Her mother had warped her nature to suit her own purposes; she had sowed seeds of evil to serve views of her own; but on the other hand, she had found a soil well adapted to their luxuriant growth. So long as Hester Blake was held within conventional bounds, she would act much as other women who have no very high standard of right; but having once passed them, there was no limit to the freedom of action she would claim for herself. Impediments in her path would then be lightly enough regarded, and they would be swept away as recklessly as she now crushed in her hand the withered flower which she had taken from her hair on the previous night.

As she threw it contemptuously aside, she thought:

"I can only afford these now, but if I choose, I can have jewels of price to flash amid my dusky tresses. How they would light up my beauty! What adoration I should win, decked in those glittering tokens of wealth! I have only to speak the word, and it will be mine. I would not hesitate, but for that creature who must claim me and mine if I yield to this temptation. Ah, well, I cannot settle on anything till I know how much I am to get, and how it is to be secured to me."

While these reflections passed through Hester's mind she rapidly completed her morning toilet, and when Mrs. Müller rang the breakfast bell she was quite ready to go out to it.

If the mother and daughter had not been so deeply preoccupied with their own thoughts, they must have observed the singular glances cast upon them by the housekeeper. She was much more attentive to the duties of the table than usual, and when she was in the room she stealthily watched and listened like a person in whose mind suspicions have been aroused which might lead to most unwelcome discoveries.

Mrs. Müller was an inveterate gossip; she was a woman of German birth, who had received American training. She had a stolid regard for her own interests, and much sharpness in securing them, and she thought by watching and waiting something would turn up to her own advantage. She could be reticent enough when the occasion arose; so she sealed her lips till the right time to speak arrived—that is, the time in which her own interests were to be served by the payment of a large bribe to secure her silence.

Mrs. Blake thought it necessary to explain to her why so early a breakfast was required on that morning, and she suddenly said:

"We received sad news last night, Mrs. Müller. My daughter's uncle, her father's half-brother, was among the injured on the railroad train yesterday, and Dr. Macon is coming hither at six o'clock to take Hester to see him. It is not thought that he can recover, and his daughter is also suffering from a severe blow on her head; but she will do well enough in a few days."

"That is bad news, sure enough, ma'am—that is, unless the gentleman is very rich, and he'll remember how nearly related Miss Hester is to him. A niece now is mighty nigh—almost as nigh as a daughter, some folks think."

Mrs. Blake glanced sharply at the speaker, but there was nothing in her face at that moment to arouse suspicion. It was as expressionless as a blank sheet of paper, and her employer carelessly said:

"Mr. Landry is one of those who think that 'blood is thicker than water,' for he has declared his intention to make a suitable provision for Hester. He can enable us to live much more handsomely than we do now, and the prosperity that comes to us, you will share of course. You have been faithful to me for many years, and it is my purpose to increase your wages when I have the means to do so."

"Thank you, ma'am. You're very generous, I am sure; and I mean to be true to you and Miss Hester to the end. I am smart enough to know on which side my bread is buttered."

Mrs. Blake raised her heavy eyes to the woman's face, but as before, it was inscrutable, and she only said:

"I believe you will find it to your interest to remain with us, Mrs. Müller, and I am sure that I should feel lost without you. There is Dr. Macon's step now. I must go to him, and learn how my brother-in-law has passed the night. You are quite ready, Hester?"

"Yes; I brought out my hat and shawl, and I will join you by the time he has told his news."

"Won't it be grand, Miss Hester, to have plenty of money, and be able to do as you please?" asked Mrs. Müller, as the door closed on Mrs. Blake.

Hester coldly replied:

"What Mr. Landry gives me will be in repayment of a debt he owes me, and it will not be so much after all. He may double our present income, but that is the utmost I expect him to do. As to money in plenty, I hardly know what that vague term means. *I* could spend fifty thousand a year, and then not get all I should like to have."

"Goodness! Don't talk that way, Miss, for such a heap of money is enough for one to live on a lifetime. I only wish I had the half of it."

"I can't say that I echo the wish," said Hester, with a light laugh, as she prepared to leave the room, "for then you would be above doing our 'chores,' as the Yankees have it, and we could not very well do without you."

Mrs. Müller stolidly looked after the flitting figure and brilliant face, and muttered:

"I'll have that much in spite of you, and mebbe more. When you're all too deep in the mud to get out, you'll pay a deal to keep from being plastered up in it. Thought you'd locked me up safe in my room, did you, young lady? You forgot how easy it is to climb out o' the windows o' this house. I'm in for a good thing, and I mean to wait and see what is the most to be made out of it."

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

* * *

—True friendship is a plant of slow growth, and must undergo and withstand the shocks of adversity, before it is entitled to the appellation.

WIT AND HUMOR.

A MASSACHUSETTS farmer, on the road between Charlton and Worcester, having been terribly annoyed by drummers, put up a sign, "No sewing machines wanted here. Got one." It was no use; the next drummer wanted to see the machine, "and perhaps he'd hitch up a trade." So the farmer put up, "Got the small-pox here." That worked well for a little while, but then came along a drummer frightfully pitted with the small-pox, who smilingly said, "Seein' you've got it bad around here, they've put *me* on this route."

A GRAVE JOKE.—News came to a band of Spiritualists in Bangor, Me., that an absent brother had died suddenly, "and been laid in the silent grave." They at once sought to open correspondence with him, succeeded, found him to be an intelligent observer of things on the other side, and were making great capital out of his communications, when he disgusted the entire circle by suddenly reappearing among them in the flesh. Some unspiritualistic wag had victimized the rapping band.

"CHARLEY, have you been doing anything to the piano while I was out? Some of the keys won't work at all." "No, ma, I didn't do anything to it; but Tom said there was a mouse in it, so I got him to hold up the top while I put the cat and dog in to catch it, and they made such an awful row I thought *sure* the mouse was a goner; but if the old thing won't work, perhaps the mouse is in there yet."

A MERIDEN expressman started off, one day last week, to transport a piano, carefully packed in straw, to Middletown. On the way it grew very warm, and finally, while wiping the perspiration from his brow, he discovered that the change of temperature was owing to a fire which had caught in the straw, the piano at the time being already half destroyed.

HAPPY FOR FIVE DOLLARS, PERHAPS.—According to the Glens Falls *Republican*, that village is now overstocked with handsome young ladies, "and young men from a distance, of good character, and with a capital of five dollars apiece to pay the minister, could be made awful happy by calling around about these days."

A LANDLORD who lately presented his bill for rent to a tenant—an up town M. D.—was let in to the doctor's private office and shown a ghastly skeleton, with the remark, "That man came in here just two weeks ago with a bill, and—" But the landlord did not stay to hear the rest of the statement.

A VENERABLE physician, who had practiced medicine for seventy years in a New Hampshire village, went the other day, as the village paper says, "to join the vast number of patients who had preceded him to the cemetery."

ON retiring from business, a wise old man said to his son and successor, "Now, my boy, remember that common-sense is the best thing you can bring to bear on every affair of life except love making."

"Do you think it is safe, my dear," said a husband to his wife, "for me to take off flannel when it looks like spring?" "Perhaps so," replied the wife, "but *I* never saw any flannel that looked like spring."

"TALKING about tooth and nail brushes," said old Dan Skiddles, "the biggest one I ever saw was a fight between two Sioux squaws. That 'brush' was tooth and nail to the last, I tell you."

A NEGRO and a locomotive had a collision on the Cleveland, Columbus and Cincinnati Railroad, the other day. Name of the negro unknown, and the whereabouts of all of him unascertained.

IF your sister should fall into a deep well, why couldn't you rescue her? Because you couldn't be a brother and a(s)sist her both at the same time, or even at different times.

A MAN who is in the habit of making additions to false rumors is like one who has confidence in all that is told him, because he re-lies on everything he hears.

A LITERARY policeman in this city has been so in the habit of taking up ugly customers, that, when off duty, he frequently "takes up" a bad book.

WHEN may a man be said to be about as hard up as a man can be? When he cannot even get credit for good intentions.

PRECOCIOUS BOY (munching the fruit of the date tree)—"Mamma, if I eat *dates* enough will I grow to be an almanac?"

IRON may be a good tonic for debilitated young ladies, but ironing is a better one.

"PA, what is a *green* grocer?" "One who trusts, my boy. Remember it."

CURRENT ITEMS.

A BEAUTIFUL young girl, fourteen years of age, of Paterson, N. J., was buried last week, her death having been the result of excessive indulgence in jumping the rope. With her companions she was to see how many times she could jump without stopping for breath. She succeeded in jumping four hundred times; but the over-exertion resulted in her death.

A CURIOUS CASE.—Detroit boasts of a lunatic who left his house a year ago, and has been travelling about ever since, under the impression that he is somebody else, and yet retaining a peculiar interest in his real self. Now and then he writes to his wife to inquire after her husband, and especially to know "whether he has got over that crazy spell yet."

THE Portland (Me.) *Argus* says that a conductor on the Grand Trunk Railway has held his present position since January, 1839, and that in all these thirty-three years he has never been once detained from his post by sickness or by accident, and has travelled back and forth on his road, in the aggregate, one million and five hundred thousand miles.

IT is reported that a toothpick factory in Canton, Me., furnishes more work than all other business in the town. Over a hundred cords of poplar have been hauled for its use within a few months, and made into toothpicks. Each of the machines used is said to have a toothpick capacity of five thousand a minute.

A SINGULAR accident recently occurred near Dublin, according to the *Pall Mall Gazette*. Two gentlemen, at a fair, were gallopping furiously in opposite directions, when the heads of their horses struck full tilt together; both horses were killed, and both riders were thrown violently and badly hurt.

IN Wilmington, Del., some time ago, an old man, who was quite feeble, was helped across a crowded street by a youth of twenty. A month afterward the old man died, and as an expression of gratitude, he left the youth forty thousand dollars. So much for a little politeness.

A YOUNG man, eighteen years of age, was caught in a belt in a New Jersey factory, on Thursday morning of last week, and whirled around the shaft till one arm was torn from his body and he was dashed with frightful violence to the floor. He died in a few minutes.

THREE million two hundred thousand acres of land, or about one-seventh of the entire State of Arkansas, were recently put up at auction, at Little Rock, for sale for non-payment of taxes, but purchasers could be found for only about one million acres.

AN Indiana woman, in going around to get signatures to a petition for the release of her husband from prison, met a man whom she liked better, burned the petition, and has applied for the divorce which the law gives a wife in such a case.

SAMUEL ASAY, a farmer who has lived for eighty-nine years in Wrightstown, Pa., had his first railroad ride last week, making a trip to Philadelphia, where he had not been before for sixty years, when he made the journey by wagon.

A SERVANT in a family in Greenwich, R. I., set a pail of hot water on the floor, and left it a moment, and a little girl, two and a half years old, the only child of the family, fell headlong into it and was scalded to death.

A NUMBER of horse-thieves confined in the jail in Bowling Green, Ky., got into a fight one night recently, over a game of cards, and one of them was struck dead by a blow on the head with a heavy board.

SOME camels on exhibition at Philadelphia broke loose one day last week, and created a great deal of excitement, the principal damage done being from the antics of frightened horses in the streets.

A YOUNG lady living in Lincoln, Vt., has sued a rich and recreant lover, just married to her rival, for breach of promise, and claims ten thousand dollars damages.

A LADY at Rochester has obtained a patent for a fan, to be attached to a sewing machine, and operated by the same power as the machine.

A PHILADELPHIA paper states that there is a boy in Vermont, six years old, who weighs one hundred and thirty-three pounds.

MERCHANTS in Dubuque, Iowa, furnish their customers with car tickets to induce them to revisit their stores.

A HILL-SIDE MEMORY.

BY LOUISE S. UPHAM.

A quaint old farm-house, nestled round
By maples, vines and roses,
Tall, waving grass, and orchards green,
Fair Memory's page discloses.

Afar, the city's hum and din,
The pomp and pride of fashion;
Anear, the sunset's flashing glow,
The moonlight's tender passion.

Like cloistered nun, it rose above
A worldly life's commotion,
Yet guarded all that sought its peace
With lover-like devotion.

The low-arched, trellised porch was bright
With many a starry glory;
On terrace, mound and lawn, flowers bloomed,
Sweet as in classic story.

But brighter, sweeter far, the soul
Of her who was the warden,
The faithful, loving gardener
Of this fair earthly garden.

All through the summer's radiant hours,
She revelled 'mid her treasures;
And winter's drear and sombre days
Were cheered with flowery pleasures.

Her love shone out 'till every room
Was brighter than a palace;
In kindly acts her life more fair
Than lily's dewy chalice.

And each returning year, what time
The brooks and bees were humming,
We knew that one whose heart was love,
Was watching for our coming.

And toiling up the long, slow hill,
We muffled e'en the beating
Of joyous hearts; to be the first
In fond love's kindly greeting.

Yet swift as wingèd arrow's flight
Her soul flew out to meet us,
And quick, in open door-way framed,
She, smiling, stood to greet us.

But now she sleeps—her busy hands
Close folded o'er a bosom
That never more shall throb or thrill,
To bird or bud or blossom.

Yet through the lengthening years, the bloom
Of her pure life will render
The dear old farm-house on the hill
Fragrant with memories tender.

The garden of the Lord hath flowers,
And love, in all completeness;
I joy to think that *now* her soul
Can drink its fill of sweetness.

Death comes to all, and day by day
His shadow hovereth nearer;
But her sweet welcome, waiting me,
Makes Heaven itself grow dearer.

◆

BETWEEN TWO FIRES.

By MRS. SOUTHWORTH,

AUTHOR OF "THE HIDDEN HAND," "SELF-MADE," "THE BROTHERS," ETC.

CHAPTER CXII.

AFTER THE HOLY WEDDING.

> The bride rose from her knee,
> And she kissed the lips of her mother dead
> Or ever she kissed me.
> E. B. BROWNING.

The benediction was scarcely spoken before the fair bride left her bridegroom's side, and moved softly and swiftly to the side of the easy-chair, where the form of her ancestress lay reclining.

All eyes followed her strange action, as she knelt beside the chair and took the wasted hand of its occupant in her own. And *some* saw what Emma had been the first to discover—that the happy spirit of the aged lady was even then departing.

She spoke no word more, but slowly raising her hand, she laid it gently, as in silent blessing, on the bowed head of her young descendent, and so, with a radiant smile, passed away heavenward.

"She 's dropped asleep, my dear," said honest, stupid John Lytton, bending over to look at the closed eyes and peaceful face.

"She has fainted. This has been too much for her," said Mrs. Fanning, catching up the vial of ammonia, and coming with the intention of administering it.

"She is neither sleeping nor swooning. She has risen," said Emma; and calmly putting aside the useless drug, she arose and reverently pressed a kiss upon the lifeless lips.

A moment of deep silence followed her words.

Then Dr. Jones, the son, himself an aged man, drew near and tenderly took up the lifeless hand and looked into the motionless face, and with a profound sigh turned away.

While this group was still gathered around the chair of death the door was silently opened, and the family physician entered the room and stood among them.

"She is gone, Dr. Willet," said the son, turning to greet the new-comer.

The physician nodded gravely to the sorrowing speaker, bowed to the assembled friends, and passed through them, as they made way for him to approach the body.

He felt the wrist, where there was no pulse, looked into the eyes, where there was no light, and then with a grave and silent nod he confirmed the opinion of Dr. Jones.

Electra, who had been incredulous all this time about the reality of the death, and was anxiously watching the face of the physician, now burst into violent weeping, and had to be led from the room by Joseph Brent—Victor Hartman.

Emma stood pale as marble, with her eyes cast down, her lips tightly pressed together, and her hands closely clasped.

"Take your young bride away also, Mr. Lytton. She is exerting great self-command now; but she cannot much longer control her feelings," said Dr. Willet.

"Come, love," whispered the bridegroom, as he passed his arm gently around the waist of the now weeping girl, and drew her away from the scene of death.

Mr. John Lytton followed them out, with the half-frightened air of a culprit stealing away from detection.

There now remained in the room of death the aged son, Dr. Beresford Jones, the family physician, Dr. Willet, the minister of the parish, the Rev. Mr. Lyle, and the two ladies, Mrs. Fanning and Laura Lytton.

"She passed away very gently, without the least suffering," said Mrs. Fanning.

"I thought she would do so. Hers has been a really physiological death, of ripe and pure old-age," answered the doctor.

After a little more conversation the gentlemen withdrew, leaving the remains to the care of the two ladies, while they went to commence arrangements for the funeral.

Four days after this the body of Mrs. Cavendish was laid in the family vault, beside those of her husband and her son, the late governor.

The old lady had been long and widely known, and deeply and sincerely loved and honored, and her funeral was as largely attended as had been that of her son, some years before. After these solemn offices had all been performed, the friends assembled to consult and make arrangements for the temporary disposition of the family left behind.

It was settled that Mrs. Fanning should remain at Blue Cliff Hall, in charge of the establishment, with Laura Lytton as her guest and companion.

Dr. Jones and Electra would of course return to Beresford Manors. They would be accompanied by Mr. Joseph Brent—Victor Hartman—who had grown to be a great favorite with the aged doctor, and in truth almost indispensable to his comfort and entertainment.

Mr. Lyle went back to the duties of his ministry at Wendover.

And finally, as there was now a vacation of the courts, and the young barrister was temporarily at liberty, Alden Lytton decided to take his young bride to Europe for their bridal tour.

On their way to New York they stopped for a day in Richmond, because Emma wished to see her old "friend" Mrs. Grey, before leaving for Europe.

Alden Lytton, though he felt persuaded in his own mind that Mrs. Grey would not receive them, yet promptly complied with his fair bride's wish.

So, the morning after their arrival at the Henrico House in Richmond, Alden took a carriage and they drove to the old Crane Manor House and inquired for Mrs. Grey.

But as Alden had foreseen, they received for an answer that Mrs. Grey was not at home.

Upon further inquiry they were told that she had left the city on business, and would not return for a week.

And Alden Lytton rightly conjectured that she had gone away, and was staying away, for the one purpose of avoiding Emma and himself.

So the young bride, with a sigh, reluctantly resigned all hope of seeing her unworthy "friend" before sailing for Europe.

Early the next morning the newly married pair took the steamboat for Washington, where in due time they safely arrived, and whence they took the train for the North.

They reached New York on Thursday night, had one intervening day to see something of the city, and to make some few last purchases for their voyage, and on Saturday at noon they embarked on the magnificent ocean steamship *Pekin*, bound from New York to Southampton.

We must leave them on board their ship, and return and look up Mary Grey.

CHAPTER CXIII.

MARY GREY'S MYSTERY.

After Mrs. Grey's last interview with Alden Lytton, during which, partly because she lost her self-command, and partly because she did not care longer to conceal her feelings, she had thrown off her mask, she sat down to review the situation.

"Well, I have betrayed myself," she mused. "I have let him see how I really feel about this marriage engagement between him and Emma Cavendish. He knows now how I loved him; if he has eyes in his head, he sees now how I hate him.

"All right. I have now no further reason to deceive him. He has served my utmost purpose for his own and her own destruction. I no longer need his unconscious coöperation. I have his honor and his liberty, and her reputation and peace in my power, and at my mercy.

"And I have done all this myself, without the voluntary help of any human being. I have used men as the mechanic uses tools, making them do his work, or as the potter uses clay, moulding it to his purpose.

"Let him marry Emma Cavendish. I can part them at any moment afterward, and throw him into a felon's prison, and cast her down from her proud place into misery and degradation.

"I *could* stop their marriage now, or at the altar. But I will not do that; for to do that would be only to disappoint and grieve them. But my vengeance must strike a deeper blow! It must degrade and ruin them. I will wait until they have been married some time. Then, in the hour of their fancied security, I will come down upon them like an avalanche of destruction."

In the feverish excitement of anticipating this fiendish consummation of her revenge, she almost forgot her heinous crime, and ceased to be haunted by the hideous spectre of her murdered lover.

It was on the fifteenth of the month, when she happened to take up the morning paper.

She turned first, as she always did, to the column containing notices of marriages and deaths.

And her face grew wild and white as she read:

MARRIED—On the morning of the 10th instant, at Blue Cliff Hall, Virginia, the seat of the bride, by the Rev. Dr. Beresford Jones, Mr. Alden Lytton of Richmond, to Miss Emma Angela, only daughter of the late Charles Cavendish, Governor of Virginia.

She read no further that day. There were other marriages following this; but she felt no curiosity *now* about them. And there was a formidable row of death notices, headed by the obituary of Mrs. Cavendish, but she did not even see it.

The announcement of the marriage had taken her by surprise. She had not expected to see it for a month yet to come. And as she did not observe the notice of Mrs. Cavendish's death, she could not understand why the marriage had been hastened by so many weeks.

"So it is over," she said. "It is over, and it has been over for five days. They are in the midst of their happiness, enjoyed at the expense of my misery. Theirs is a fool's paradise from which I could eject them at any moment, but I will not—not just yet. The longer I suspend the blow, the heavier it will fall at last!

"They will carry out their programme, I presume, so far, at least, as to go upon their bridal trip to Europe. I could stop them on the eve of their voyage, but I will not. I will let them go and return, and hold their wedding reception, and then, in the midst of their joy and triumph, in the presence of their admiring friends—"

She paused to gloat with demoniac enjoyment over the picture her wicked imagination had conjured up.—"Then I will turn all their joy to despair, all their triumph to humiliation, all their glory to shame!

"And I will do all this alone, alone, or use others only as my blind tools.

"Of course they will take this city on their way to New York, to embark for Europe. And they will call on me to show me their happiness, and take a keener relish of it from seeing the contrast of my misery. But they shall be disappointed in that, at least. I will not be dragged at the wheels of their triumphal car. I will not stay here to receive them. I will leave town, and stay out of it until I am sure that they have passed through and left it."

She kept her word. She went down to Forestville, ostensibly to relieve a poor family suffering under an accumulation of afflictions, but really to be out of the way of the bridal pair, and to get up evidence in the case she intended to bring against the husband of Emma Cavendish.

When she had been but a few days at Forestville she received a letter from Miss Romania Crane—who in her absence kept up a sentimental correspondence with her—informing her of the visit of Mr. and Mrs. Alden Lytton, the bride and bridegroom from Blue Cliffs, who stopped for a day in the city on their way to New York.

Immediately on her receipt of this letter she returned to Richmond and to the house of the Miss Cranes.

And she very much surprised and shocked these ladies by assuming an air of grief and distraction as extreme in itself as it was unaccountable to them.

They could not even imagine what was the matter with her. She refused to give any explanation of her apparent mental anguish, and she repelled all sympathy.

The Miss Cranes were afraid she was going to lose her reason.

They went to see the minister and the minister's wife on the subject. They found only the lady at home. And to her they stated the mysterious case.

"There is something very heavy on her mind, my dear. I am sure there is something awful on her mind."

"There has been this long time, I think," said the minister's wife.

"Yes, I know; but it is a thousand times worse now. My dear, she keeps her room nearly all day. She never comes to the table. If I send her meals up to her, they come back almost untasted. And I assure you she does not sleep any better than she eats. Her room is over mine, and so I can hear her walking the floor half the night," said Miss Romania Crane.

"What *can* be the cause of her distress?" inquired the rector's lady.

"I *don't* know. I *can't* get her to tell me. She only says that 'her life is wrecked forever, and that she wishes only to be left to herself until death shall relieve her.' And all that sort of talk," said Miss Romania.

"And have you no suspicion?"

"None in the world that seems at all rational. The only one I have seems foolish."

"But what is it?"

"Well, I sometimes think—but indeed it is a silly thought—that her distress is in some way connected with the marriage of Mr. Lytton and Miss Cavendish, for I notice that every time the name of either of them is mentioned, she grows so much worse that I and my sister have ceased ever to speak of them."

"It cannot be that she was ever in love with Mr. Lytton," suggested the minister's lady.

"I should think not. I should think she was not that weak-minded sort of woman to give way to such sentiment, much less to be made so extremely wretched by it. For I do tell you, my dear, her state is simply that of the utmost mental wretchedness."

"I will ask my husband to go to her. He is her pastor, and may be able to do her some good," said the minister's wife.

"Do, my dear, and come to see her yourself," said Miss Romania, as she and her sister arose to take leave.

Now you know all this distress was just "put on" by Mrs. Grey, to give coloring and plausibility to her future proceedings.

To be sure she kept her room, but it was not to grieve in secret—it was to excite the compassion and wonder of her sympathizing friends, while she laid her plans, drank French cordials, and feasted privately on the delicacies of the season, which she would secretly bring in, or dozed on her sofa and dreamed of her coming sweet revenge.

Certainly, instead of going to bed at a decent hour, she would walk the floor of her chamber half the night. But this was not done because she was suffering, or sleepless from grief, but for the purpose of keeping poor Miss Crane awake all night in the room below, and making the poor lady believe that she, Mary Grey, was breaking her own heart in these vigils.

And for her want of nightly rest Mary Grey compensated herself by dozing half the day on her sofa; and for her want of regular meals, she made up by slipping out occasionally and feasting at some "ladies' restaurant."

But her object was effected. She impressed everybody who came near her with the belief that she had suffered some awful wrong or bereavement of which she could not speak, but which threatened to unseat her reason or end her life.

CHAPTER CXIV.

MARY GREY'S STORY.

At length her minister came to see her. He expressed the deepest sympathy with her sufferings, and implored her to relieve her overburdened heart by confiding in him, or in his wife, from either or both of whom, he assured her, she should receive respectful compassion and substantial assistance, if the last was necessary.

Then, pretending to yield to his better judgment, she consented to give him her confidence.

And taking him up to her own sitting-room, where they could be safe from interruption, she bound him over to secrecy, and then, with many affected tears and moans, she told him the astounding story that she had long been privately married to Mr. Alden Lytton, who had deserted her within a few days after their wedding, and who had recently, as every one knew, united himself in matrimony with Miss Emma Cavendish of Blue Cliffs, Virginia, and had gone with her on a wedding trip to Europe.

While she told him this stupendous tale, the minister sat with open mouth and eyes, gazing on her with more of the air of an idiot, than of a learned and accomplished gentleman.

He was, in fact, utterly amazed and confounded by the story he had heard.

That Alden Lytton, a young man of the highest social position, of unblemished reputation from his youth up, an accomplished scholar, a learned jurist, an eloquent barrister, and more than all, a Christian gentleman, should have been guilty of the base treachery and the degrading crime here charged upon him, was just simply incredible—no more nor less than incredible!

Or that Mary Grey, the loveliest lady of his congregation, should be capable of a malicious fabrication, was utterly impossible!

There was then but one way out of the dilemma: Mary Grey was insane, and suffering under a distressing hallucination that took this form.

So said the look of consternation and pity that the minister fixed upon the speaker's face.

"I see that you discredit my story, and doubt even my sanity. But here is something that you can neither doubt nor discredit," she said, as she drew from her pocket the marriage certificate and placed it in his hands.

The minister opened and read it. And as he read this evidence of a "Christian gentleman's" base perfidy, the look of consternation and amazement that had held possession of his countenance gave place to one of disgust and abhorrence.

"Do you doubt *now*?" meaningly inquired Mary Grey.

"Ah, no, I cannot doubt now. I wish to Heaven I could! I would rather, my child, believe you to be under the influence of a distressing hallucination than know this man to be the consummate villain this certificate proves him to be. I cannot doubt the certificate. I wish I could; but I know this Rev. Mr. Borden. On my holiday trips north, I have sometimes stopped at his house and filled his pulpit. I am familiar with his handwriting. I cannot doubt," groaned the minister.

Mary Grey dropped her hands, and pretended to sob aloud.

"Do not weep so much, poor child! Deeply wronged as you have been by this ruthless sinner, you have not been so awfully injured as has been this most unhappy young lady, Miss Cavendish, whom he has deceived to her destruction," said the minister.

"And do you not suppose that I grieve for *her* too?" sobbed Mary Grey.

"Ah, yes, I am sure your tender, generous heart, wronged and broken as it is, has still the power left to grieve for her as well as for yourself."

"But what is my duty? Ah! what is my duty in this supreme trial? I cannot save *my* life or hers from utter wreck, but I can do my duty, and I will do it, if only it is pointed out to me! Oh, sir, point it out to me!" cried the hypocrite, clasping her hands with a look of sincerity that might have deceived a London detective.

"My dear, can you possibly be in doubt as to what your duty is?" sorrowfully inquired the minister.

"Oh, my mind is all confused by this terrible event. I cannot judge rationally. Ought I to keep silence, and go away to some remote place and live in obscurity, dead to the world, so as never even by chance to interfere with their happiness, or to bring trouble on Miss Cavendish? I think, perhaps he expects even that much from my devotion to him. Or ought I not to make way with myself altogether, for her sake? Would not a courageous suicide be justifiable, and even meritorious, under such trying circumstances?"

"My child! my child! how wildly and sinfully you talk! Your brain is certainly touched by your troubles. You must not dream of doing any of the dreadful things you have mentioned. Your duty lies plainly before you. Will you have the courage to do it, if I point it out to you?"

"Oh, yes, I will! I will! It is all that is left me to do."

"Then your duty is to lodge information against that wretched man, so that he shall be arrested the moment he sets foot in the State."

"Oh, Heaven of Heavens! And ruin Emma Cavendish?" exclaimed the traitress, in well simulated horror.

"And save Emma Cavendish from a life of involuntary degradation and misery. You must do this. To-morrow I will introduce you to a young lawyer of distinguished ability, who will give you legal advice even as I have given you religious counsel. And we will both confer together, so as to save you as much as possible from all painful share in the prosecution of this man."

"It is *all* painful! All agonizing! But I think you and I will not shrink from our duty. Oh, could you ever have believed, without such proof as I have given you, that Mr. Alden Lytton could ever have been guilty of this crime?"

"Never! never! And yet I know that men of exalted character have sometimes fallen very deeply into sin. Even David, 'the man after God's own heart,' took the wife of his devoted friend, and betrayed this faithful friend to a cruel death! Why should we wonder, then, at any man's fall? But, my child, I must ask you a question, that I have been waiting to ask you all this time. Why did you not interfere to stop this felonious marriage before it took place? What timidity, what weakness, or what pride was it that restrained your hand from acting in time to prevent this fearful crime of Mr. Lytton, this awful wrong to Miss Cavendish, from being consummated?" gravely and sadly inquired the minister.

"Oh, sir! how *can* you ask me such a question? Do you suppose that if I had had the remotest suspicion of what was going on, I should not have interfered and prevented it at all hazards, yes, even at the sacrifice of my own life, if that had been necessary?"

"You did not know of this beforehand then?"

"Why, certainly not!"

"Nor suspect it?"

"Assuredly not. I had not the least knowledge, nor the faintest suspicion that anything of the sort was contemplated by Mr. Lytton, until after it was all over. The first I heard of it was from the Miss Cranes, who wrote me at Forestville, that Mr. and Mrs. Alden Lytton, the bride and bridegroom, from Blue Cliffs, had called on me during my absence. The news, when it was confirmed, nearly killed me. But think of the insanity of their calling on me! But I know that was Emma's wish. And I feel sure that Mr. Lytton must have known of my absence from town, or he never would have ventured to bring his deceived bride into my home!"

"No, indeed, probably not. Well, my poor child, I have shown you your painful duty. See that you do not falter in it," said the rector, as he rose to take leave.

"I will not," answered Mary Grey.

"I will call at ten o'clock to-morrow morning, to take you to Mr. Desmond's office."

"I will be ready."

And the minister took his leave.

Punctual to his appointment, the next morning at ten o'clock the rector called for Mary Grey, and took her in his own carriage to the office of Philip Desmond, one of the most talented among the rising young barristers of Richmond.

Mr. Desmond enjoyed a high reputation not only as a professional man, but as a private gentleman.

But he was the professional rival and the political opponent of Mr. Alden Lytton. They were always engaged on opposite sides of the same case, and on several important occasions Alden Lytton had gained a triumph over Philip Desmond.

He was therefore more astonished than grieved when the rector, after introducing Mary Grey under the name of Mrs. Alden Lytton, proceeded to confide to him, under the seal of temporary secrecy, the stupendous story of Alden Lytton's double marriage.

He expressed much amazement at the double treachery of the man, deep sympathy with the sorrows of the suffering and forsaken wife, and great indignation at the wrongs of the deceived and unhappy young lady.

He readily promised to coöperate with the minister in having the culprit brought speedily to justice.

"You, madam, of course, as his wife, can take no active part in the prosecution of this man. You cannot even give testimony against him with your own voice. But you must appear in court, to be identified by the rector, the sexton and others who witnessed your marriage," said the lawyer, in taking leave of his visitors.

The rector took Mrs. Grey back to her boarding-house, and while she was gone up stairs to lay off her bonnet and shawl, he told the Miss Cranes that their interesting boarder *had* confided her trouble to him, that she had suffered the deepest wrong that any woman could be doomed to bear; but he could not explain more then; they would know all about it in a short time, when the wrong-doer should be brought to justice.

And having thus mystified the poor ladies, he further recommended Mary Grey to their tenderest sympathy and care.

And so he went home, leaving them in a state of greater bewilderment than ever.

CHAPTER CXV.

ABOUT BLUE CLIFFS.

Before Mr. and Mrs. Alden Lytton had left Blue Cliff Hall, they had made arrangements for the complete renovation of that old ancestral seat, to be carried on under the supervision of the Rev. Mr. Lyle.

And they expressed their intention to purchase and send furniture from London and Paris to refit it.

But the works were scarcely commenced, when they had to be suspended for a few days.

Another death had occurred in the family circle.

Dr. Beresford Jones, after a very pleasant evening spent at Blue Cliff Hall in company with Mrs. Fanning, Laura Lytton, his granddaughter Electra, and his great favorite Mr. Joseph Brent, arose, saying:

"I will now retire to bed, and I recommend you, Electra, my dear, to do the same, as we have to rise early to-morrow morning to set out on our return to Beresford Manors."

And he kissed her good-night, bowed to the other members of the circle, took up his taper and retired.

The next morning he went away indeed, but not to Beresford Manors.

For when Electra went into his room, as was her custom, to kiss him good-morning before he should get up, she found nothing but his body, still warm, and with the face still wearing the happy smile with which his spirit had impressed it, in taking his heavenward flight.

Her screams desecrated the holy room of death, and brought all the household to her presence.

When they discovered the cause of the girl's wild grief, Mrs. Fanning and Laura Lytton together forced her from the room and took her to her own chamber, where they set themselves to soothe her.

Joseph Brent, himself overcome with grief at the sudden loss of one who had proved himself so warm a friend, set out on horseback to Wendover, to fetch the family physician and the minister.

They were useless to the departed, of course; but they might be of some service to the bereaved ones left behind.

So Mr. Lyle and Dr. Willet returned with Mr. Brent, and remained at Blue Cliff Hall until after all was over.

And thus it happened that within one fortnight there were two funerals at Blue Cliffs.

On the day after that upon which the remains of Beresford Jones were laid in the family vault, his will was opened and read to his relatives, assembled for the purpose in the library of Blue Cliff Hall.

With the exception of a few legacies left to friends and servants, he bequeathed the whole of his real estate and personal property exclusively and unconditionally to his beloved granddaughter, Electra Coroni.

And he appointed his esteemed friends Stephen Lyle and Joseph Brent joint executors of his will, trustees of his estate, and guardians of his heiress.

And to each of these executors he left a legacy of ten thousand dollars.

Folded within the will was an informal letter addressed to his surviving friends, and requesting that no mourning should be worn for him, no wedding deferred, no innocent pleasure delayed on his account, for that death was only a higher step in life, and that which to him would be a great gain and glory, must not seem to them a loss and gloom.

Electra, with her gusty nature, wept vehemently during the reading of this will and letter.

But there was one present who, though he betrayed no emotion, was much more deeply moved than any one present. This was Joseph Brent.

In being appointed guardian, trustee and executor of the will, he had just received from Dr. Beresford Jones the greatest proof of esteem and confidence that any one man could receive from another; and when he thought of this in connection with his own woful past, he felt deeply disturbed.

After the reading of the will the assembled relatives dispersed from the room, leaving the two executors to converse together.

When Joseph Brent found himself alone with his friend Stephen Lyle, he gave way to his feelings and said:

"My heart is full of compunction."

"Why?" gravely inquired Mr. Lyle.

"Because I should have confided in the dear old friend who put so much trust in me. I should have told him my whole miserable past history. And then, perhaps, he never would have given me so great a mark of his esteem. And Heaven knows I fully intended to tell him before asking him to accept me as the suitor of his granddaughter, even though it had cost me the loss of her who is dearer to me than life. But I put off the painful task, and now it is too late! And I feel as if I had obtained the honors he has conferred upon me by a fraud. No less!" said Joseph Brent, covering his face with his hands.

"My brother, you are morbid on this subject. Certainly you intended to tell him before asking to marry his granddaughter. And most certainly it would have been right for you to do so, had he remained among us. But he is gone. And you are free from blame. If you must tell any one, tell the girl you love, and who loves and trusts you, for it is now no one's business but hers and yours. Or rather, because you would never do yourself justice, let me tell her how once a poor, motherless boy, left to himself, lost his way in this world, and strayed even to the very brink of perdition. And how nobly since that, he has, by the grace of Heaven, redeemed and consecrated his life. And then see if she will not place her hand in yours, for good and all."

"You always comfort and strengthen me," said the young man, seizing and wringing the hand of his friend.

And then they consulted about the will of the late Dr. Jones, and the arrangements to be made with his estates, and the disposition to be made of his heiress.

"We are her guardians," said Mr. Lyle, "but neither you nor I, being bachelors both, have a proper home to offer her. Nor will it be well for her to live at Beresford Manors, with no one but her colored servants. Mrs. Fanning has invited her to remain here for the present, and really this house seems to be the best place for her just now. But, after all, the decision must be left to herself, and she must choose her own home."

Mr. Brent agreed perfectly with the views of Mr. Lyle.

And later in the same afternoon they consulted the wishes of their young ward, who emphatically declared in favor of Blue Cliff Hall as her temporary home.

The next morning Mr. Lyle and Mr. Brent took leave of the ladies, and returned to Wendover, where the Californian again became the inmate of the minister's home.

But both gentlemen continued to be frequent visitors at Blue Cliff Hall.

On the Monday following the funeral, the work was recommenced on the old mansion, and went rapidly on—the three ladies, Mrs. Fanning, Laura Lytton and Electra, moving from one part of the house to another, as the improvements progressed.

Six weeks after this they received the first cargo of new furniture for the drawing-rooms, which were ready for it.

And as the work went on, from room to room they received more furniture to fit them up.

At the end of three months the work was completed, within and without.

And the fine old mansion, thoroughly remodelled and refurnished, presented as elegant and attractive an appearance as any modern palace in the whole country.

And then, when all was ready for the returning bride and bridegroom, Mrs. Fanning received a letter from them, informing her that on the Saturday following the date of that letter they were to embark on board the steamship *Amazon*, bound from Liverpool to New York, and they expected to be at Blue Cliffs in two weeks from the day of embarkation.

Yes, the happy young pair were on their way home, unconscious of the horrible pitfall that had been dug to receive them!

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

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SAM. AND THE DOCTOR.

Sam. Peablossom persisted in the declaration that he had cut his eye-teeth. He "knew what was what," and allowed nobody to get ahead of him in a bargain. One day Sam. called upon Dr. Gargle for some medicine. The doctor kept a small drug-store, and quite a number of people were lounging in the cozy, comfortable quarters, and enjoying the host's witty sayings, when Sam. entered.

"What's to pay?" asked Sam., after the medicine had been put up.

"Five and eightpence is my usual charge," answered Gargle.

"Too much," said Sam., sententiously. "Throw off the odd change, and I'll pay you the even."

"Well," replied the doctor, good-naturedly, "we won't quarrel about trifles. Let it be as you say."

Sam. laid down eightpence and started to walk off.

"Hold," said Gargle. "What does this mean? Five shillings is the sum agreed upon."

"No, no," responded Sam., with a chuckle. "You said you'd throw off the odd, and I should pay the even. Five is odd, and eight is even, is'nt it?"

"Never mind," said Gargle, raking the eightpence into his till. "The medicine you've got is worth just one penny; so I've made seven-pence out of you, after all."

Sam. left the store without further remark, and with his faith in medicine decidedly shaken.

S. C., JR.

◆

Advice to Young Wives.

The young wife should remember that she has chosen her own lot in life; she has connected it with that of her husband, and if, by the decree of an all-wise Providence, he becomes embarrassed, it is her duty to aid him by her kindness, not to mutter or oppress him by her ill-temper. Upon the male sex the task of providing the means of subsistence is, in civilized society, almost exclusively imposed; and consequently, when they become distressed, and have not wherewithal to provide for their partners, *they* suffer doubly. They have not only their own privations to regret, but yours also; and the world's frown, and the world's—oftentimes unjust—censure, falls exclusively upon the husband. The wife can hide herself from the world, but the husband must face its pride, its prosperity. May *all* young wives be permanently prosperous; but, for their own sakes, and for the honor of womanhood, we admonish them not to let adversity, should it unfortunately lay its iron hand upon them, induce them to depart from that affectionate conduct, in word or deed, which they owe to their husbands; and conduct themselves in such a manner as to do away with the truth of the old proverb: "When *poverty* comes in at the door, *love* flies out at the window."

THE NEW YORK LEDGER

NEW YORK LEDGER

ROBERT BONNER, EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR.

NEW YORK, SATURDAY, MAY 25, 1872.

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Corner of William and Spruce sts., New York.

Too Much Regard for Money.

Why is it that frauds and breaches of trust are so common? It is mainly because there is too much deference shown for mere wealth, howsoever acquired.

Many people think that if they only get money, no matter how, they will be treated with respect and deference. And it must be admitted that such views have had too much foundation in truth. We have too often seen honest Poverty trudging, unnoticed, on foot, while arrogant Fraud drove by in stately pride, the object of general attention, and seemingly of respect.

In regard to these things, however, we think a wholesome change is taking place in public sentiment. "Is he rich?" is no longer the only question asked. It is followed by, "How did he acquire his wealth?"

Even the maternal instinct, which formerly seemed satisfied with the assurance that the suitor of a marriageable daughter had plenty of money, now extends its anxiety to know also whether he is or is not a brute.

We hope to see the amendment in the popular view of mere wealth which has begun, continue to go on until money, when weighed in the balance against virtue and worth, shall always be found wanting.

A False, False Swain.

An extraordinary breach of promise case has been tried in England. The plaintiff was a young lady of twenty-three, the daughter of a respectable widow lady. The defendant was a farmer, aged twenty-nine.

The peculiarity of the suit was that it was brought, not for the breach of a single promise to marry, but for breaking one promise, and afterward making another and breaking that also.

The first engagement was made in 1868. While this engagement existed, the plaintiff was startled one day by intelligence that the defendant had actually married another young lady. She submitted quietly to this ill-treatment until the following year, when the wife of the defendant died.

After the lapse of several months his attentions to the plaintiff were renewed, and she, woman-like, forgave him his former treachery, and they became engaged a second time.

After a while the defendant again relapsed from his devotion to the plaintiff, and finally married another.

She now sought the insufficient redress for wounded affections to be afforded by a court of justice, and the jury gave her a verdict of twenty-five hundred dollars—more, we think, than such a fickle fellow would have been worth as a husband, although a very poor consolation for her disappointment.

Acting.

Some men, and some women, are always acting. They are just as much actors as if they were on the stage. They cannot get up or sit down, they cannot move, they cannot speak, without thinking how they appear to others.

It is painful to live with such persons. They are never natural; they cannot be natural. They are constantly studying for effect in everything.

We must say that we like natural people. We like a good warm grip of the hand. We like a ringing, hearty laugh, no matter how loud it is. We like words that are earnest and true, and actions that are genuine, spontaneous and instinctive. Give us warm nature rather than cold calculation.

Selling Votes.

How a member of a Legislature can deliberately make up his mind to sell his vote is, to us, incomprehensible.

It is not his constituents, so much, that we should think he would be ashamed to look in the face, as himself. We should suppose his own looking-glass would become hateful to his sight. We should think the ill-gotten money would bore through his pocket into his flesh.

It is monstrous, this taking of bribes by members of the Legislature, which is said to be prevalent.

Young men of the country, set your faces against it!

NOVEL MODE OF SUICIDE.—A woman in Buffalo swallowed some hair dye for the purpose of committing suicide. It produced convulsions, but not death.

The Wrong Gown.

[From the Rolla Express.]

Mrs. Hilderbrand is in jail in this city for robbing a church at St. James. In searching her house for the stolen property, a clerical looking robe of pure white was taken possession of, among other things, and returned, as was supposed, to its accustomed place in the church wardrobe. On the following Sunday the clergyman, in trying to get into the thing, discovered that somebody had made a very awkward mistake. It was the woman's nightgown.

The Force of Moral Influence.

There are certain evils which affect society, and which do their full part in making this a world of woe. There is squalid, miserable poverty; there is disgusting, lamentable vice; there is horrible crime, public execution, and national war. All these things, it is said, are inevitable; they spring from the nature of man, and from the laws which compel him to dwell in social connection. Those who say so are shallow thinkers. The world is naturally a beautiful world. But what God has made a Paradise for our dwelling-place, mankind have often rendered a desert by their crimes. Nature and revelation alike proclaim that the Creator intended we should be happy; but how has brutal ignorance, vile intemperance, gross crime, and every species of evil desires, blighted our comforts and degraded our immortal being! It has never yet been proved that there must *necessarily* be poverty, which is the source of many evils. A striking instance of the absence of poverty in a large class of society is found in the case of the Quakers, or community of Friends. With some peculiarities in speech and dress, not worth while to heed, this numerous body of individuals act upon a fixed, uniform principle of suppressing the passions. They curb the appetites and headlong impulses of human nature. They are subject to the same temptations and perversions that we are; yet, by the exercise of a singular degree of prudence, they avoid them. Here, then, is a clear demonstration, that even without the aid of civil power, but by the mere force of moral influence, there is a class of men, in the midst of society, who do escape disgraceful poverty, and who are generally free from vice and crime.

Dreams and Presentiments.

We have published an account of the dream of Gen. HUMPHREY MARSHALL, a short time before his death, which was not fulfilled. Probably not one dream in ten thousand is. Once in a while, however, we hear of a dream, or a presentiment, which is realized.

JOHN AVERY, a young man from this city, has been convicted of murder in New Jersey, and sentenced to be hanged on the 28th day of June next. We find the following in the *Jersey City Evening Journal:*

"One year and a half ago, John Avery, the Cresskill murderer, resided with his mother in Thompson street, New York. One morning he came down stairs, and his mother, seeing his troubled look, asked what was the matter. He told her that he had had a dreadful dream; that he had dreamed he had a dispute with a man, and from that time he bore a deadly hatred to him. One night he thought he lay in wait for him and killed him. He then wandered about, fearing to meet any one, as he thought they were all aware of his guilt. At last he was captured, as he dreamed, and taken before the Judge and sentenced to be hung. The terror inspired by his dream awoke him, and for some time he could not again fall asleep. When he did, it was to have the final act of this dreadful phantasy of the brain completed. He thought that he was led to the gallows, and had the fatal noose around his neck. He awoke with a scream, and instinctively put his hand to his throat. It was a singular dream, and will shortly have a fearful verification. Psychologists and dream interpreters may find in this case of Avery's something on which to reflect and speculate."

A correspondent of the *World*, who was on board the steamer Oceanus when she exploded, on the Mississippi river, and who was himself badly scalded and burnt, and was finally rescued in an insensible condition, after floating, with a piece of plank clasped in his arms, a distance of three miles, thinks that not only he and some of the other passengers had a foreshadowing apprehension of this calamity, but that a similar nervous feeling was experienced by a cage of lions on board. He says:

"At about 11 o'clock most of the passengers had gone to bed or were in the cabin, and but three or four persons, including myself, remained on deck. I don't know how it was, but before long we were all sitting together, and our conversation drifted toward explosions and disasters of the sort which had taken place within the last few years on the Mississippi, and before long I, at least, had become somewhat nervous. At about half-past twelve I went to my room, undressed, and tried to get asleep, but I merely lay there and tossed, and though I had travelled over this route many and many a time, had never felt so before.

"I could not rest, and after tumbling and kicking about till about two o'clock, I got up, dressed myself, and went out on the deck again. Then I went down to see the lions asleep in their cage, which was in a wagon on the forecastle deck. There were seven of them, two, as I remember, being full-grown, and five cubs, which were a part of Robinson's circus. The cubs were all curled up in a corner fast asleep, but the old ones were walking restlessly up and down in their cage, and occasionally giving vent to that horrible roar, that snarling growl and cry, which is enough to strike terror to the soul of even man. Their eyes gleamed through the half darkness, and now that I think of it, the lions seemed to have the same presentiment of coming evil with which I was impressed. Any man who has had anything to do with menageries will say that lions are always ready to eat, no matter when or how fully they may have been fed, and yet, when I threw into the cage some beef, not one of the beasts touched it, although they had not recently tasted food. They came up to it in their restless walk, sniffed at it, and then turned away to resume their restless march.

"Finally, at about a quarter past four o'clock, I returned to my berth, determined to sleep, if possibly I could. The next thing I knew was a horrible and deafening noise. I said to myself the time has come. The whole passage through the staterooms was filled with boiling steam and flying wood, and in the insanity of the moment I rushed at the other doors near me and tried to wrench them open, yelling like a madman, and crying, 'Get up! Awake! The boiler has burst!'"

He gives the following vivid picture of these terrified wild beasts, as he last saw them:

"In running wildly about the boat, I found myself brought suddenly up by the caged lions, toward which the fire—for the boat had already begun to burn—was creeping on steadily and surely. The lions howled and shrieked with terror, they clawed at the bars of their cage, standing on their hind legs and taking the wires between their teeth, munching and clawing them in the intensity of brute fear and horror. The cubs whined and screamed, running about their cage with the most distressed cries and creeping up to the old ones, who would occasionally turn around to bite or to lick them. I stopped by them a minute and tried to find some way of opening their cage, and they ceased their yells for the moment, as though they thought that I was to free them, and they would wait. I tugged at the bars, but it was of no use. I heard somebody calling, 'Williams, Williams, give me the keys; don't let the beasts be roasted to death;' but the fire came on hotter and hotter, and I ran to a place where some temporary safety seemed to be offered. The whole cage of lions yelled and roared as I ran away, as if they knew that I was leaving them to the most horrible of deaths."

A Considerate Man.

OLIVER M. WHIPPLE, of Lowell, Mass., whose death, at the age of seventy-eight years, is announced, was a peculiar and original character. He was formerly largely engaged in the manufacture of gunpowder. Occasionally one of his mills would blow up—a catastrophe from which no precautions have yet rendered the business exempt.

Mr. WHIPPLE became rich, and he was remarkable for the kindness and generosity with which he provided for the families of those who lost their lives by the explosions of his mills and while in his employ. The widow of one of these unfortunate men he subsequently married, and we presume it is her children who now inherit his large property.

FESTIVE MOURNING.—Since the death of Professor MORSE, his statue in Central Park has been decorated with a wreath of green.

(NOT) AN ARTICLE.

BY HENRY WARD BEECHER.

My dear Mr. BONNER, good-bye. Don't expect an article from me to-day. My head is not sublunary and secular; it is pointed upward—toward peace—and Peekskill! But, like all blessings, this of Peekskill must be won through care and labor. From New York we shall take the eight o'clock train; but to get that train from Brooklyn, *hic labor hoc afar est*. (You can put in a note the translation of that. It is Latin—borrowed, I believe, from Dr. Cox.)

You must get ready the night before. Rise by six o'clock. Get a hasty, unsocial, solitary grab at the breakfast by 6:30, and be off at 6:45. You cross Fulton Ferry, canter up to the City Hall Park to catch a Harlem horse car, and busy yourself every five minutes, after you get in, looking at your watch to see if you shall hit the train. Boys every two or three blocks yell in your ears, as if they had just ascended from the world of torment, "Eer's the mornin' papees!"—Oh, that it was lawful to choke a few people every day!—say one or two! Who would you pick out? Well, it is not lawful—it is not right; and I never think of it, and would not if I could.

At length we reach the Grand Central Depot. As the cars stop on the eastern side, everybody has to walk around two sides of the huge caravansera, which amounts to two blocks or more. With carpet-bag and shawl I rush, and reach eager hands for a ticket, and get through the door, the last one—man, not door—just as the train is moving off.

Oh for that Bridge, across which steam cars are to take Brooklynites to the up-town train! Oh for that Tunnel by which we are to be put on equal footing with New Yorkers.

But we are safely on our way; the new route around Harlem river is passed, the Spuyten Duyvel is reached, we get on the old track again. The palisades shine in the morning sun from across the river; the air is balm; tender green is just peeping forth from a few trees in sheltered places. We see with expansion of soul the mirror-like Tappan Zee shining before us. We rush through Tarrytown, and shoot through the tunnel of Sing Sing—whose palace has in it so many that ought not to be there, they think, and out of it so many that ought to be in it, we think—and in a few minutes more we see the bold mountains, the Highlands, the Race. Off Peekskill is the finest view on the Hudson river, when the atmosphere favors its finest effect.

Here we are. One not knowing would say this was a mere manufacturing corner: foundries, shops—all sorts of dirty places. It certainly is not comely. But the village is up upon the hill. Go a quarter of a mile, and you will pass through the streets, which really I should be glad to praise, and have sought often and anxiously to praise, but I fear my readers would not agree with me. Dusty or muddy are the streets; the houses crowded to the line of the sidewalk; few of them beautiful; all the beauty must be sought in the trees. Well, hurry on. We shall soon reach the hill of peace! There it lies—a gentle slope—modest, undemonstrative to those who pass it on the road, but from its own elevation how fair a scene! how sweet the air! What rest both in the heavens and earth! It is situate at that exact point where cares die, and rest comes, bringing sweet contentment, and only one irksome desire intrudes, and that desire is, that you might never go back to the city.

I am gone to the hills of Rest, Mr. BONNER, and leave this behind me only to tell you not to look for an article.

MEN AS THEY ARE.

I sometimes wish that ministers left their libraries to gather dust, and set themselves to studying human nature and the world as it is, and not as they suppose it to be. I sometimes wish that, in disguise, if it can be done in no other way, they would make themselves personally acquainted with the hindrances and traps and snares sprung for men's halting, and be the better able to judge by what means they might be wisely drawn aside from them, other than denunciation, and whether substitutes for such pleasures ought not oftener to be devised, instead of recommending church, or tracts, or prayer-meetings. I am very sure that on a study of these things depends the well-being of many a man and woman whose bare and joyless lives clergymen little understand at present; the devil is so cunning in the knowledge of these weak and undefended sides of human beings, and Christians and ministers, with all their well wishing, so ignorant of them, and so slow when told, to believe in the necessity of recognizing them.

Oh, my good friends, one and all, leave the study of Keren Happuck and Zerubbabel for John Smith and Jacob Jones, of your parishes, who are going fast to perdition for want of the first steps to spiritual enlightenment by recognition of their *human* needs. God's silent preachers, the sun and the fresh air and the flowers, neither humiliate nor crush him, though he be friendless and homeless. For that bright sunshine is *his*, he knows, as well as yours. I am glad when he roams off and has such a Sabbath, with his little ones.

Would you rather he should go to church? Then why build it so fine that he feels like an outcast there?

FANNY FERN.

Hydrophobia—Is there any Cure for It?

Every few months we read in the daily papers an account of some new case of hydrophobia. We do not know of any more terrible and shocking form of disease. It is harrowing to one's feelings to merely read a description of the sufferings of its victims. Is there any cure for it? A correspondent of the *Detroit Tribune* describes a case where the man was in convulsions and barked like a dog, but which seems to have been successfully treated. The *Tribune* says:

"During these convulsions the patient would seize the pillows from his bed in his teeth, and shake and rend them with all the seeming ferocity of an angry dog. An intense dread of water also exhibited itself. The doctors decided to place the patient upon the same treatment which had been successful in a former case, which, for the aid it may be to others who suffer from this disease, we here give, as follows: The injection under the skin of large doses of morphine, and the administration of large doses of castor, which is a powerful anti-spasmodic. About one grain of the sulphate of morphine was injected under the skin once in four hours, and half a drachm of the powdered castor, mixed with syrup, given internally. The effect was to produce sleep in about half an hour, which lasted about an hour and a half, when the convulsions returned at intervals of an hour to an hour and a half until nine o'clock Sunday morning, when the last convulsion occurred; after which he suffered severely from obstinate vomiting until Monday at ten o'clock, when that also ceased, leaving the patient comparatively easy, but very much prostrated. Since that time he has gradually improved, and now is, to all appearances, quite well. In addition to the above treatment small quantities of chloroform were inhaled at times, and on Sunday morning the patient was wrapped in a woolen blanket wrung out of a warm solution of muriate of ammonia, eighteen to twenty grains to the ounce. This was the treatment which checked this fearful malady, and which the doctors, for the sake of humanity, are anxious should be published to the world, and thoroughly tested."

THE AMBITIOUS VINE.

AN APOLOGUE OF THE ALGIC INDIANS.

BY JOHN G. SAXE.

I.
A Vine that stood beside a thriving Oak,
Grew weary of the labor
Of self-support—and thus she plainly spoke
Unto her stronger neighbor:—

II.
"I prithee bend your handsome trunk to me,
My noble forest-brother;
That, mutually embracing, we may be
Supporters of each other."

III.
"Nay," said the tree, "I was not made to bend;
I 'm strong and self-reliant,
As oaks are wont,—but you, my pretty friend,
Are twenty times as pliant!

IV.
"So clasp your slender arms around me, dear;
And we will grow together,
High as yon azure cloud—nor ever fear
The roughest wind or weather!"

V.
"Nay, nay," replied the foolish Vine, "I hate
To seem so much your debtor;
You do the twining, now; and *I*'ll be straight;
I 'd like it vastly better!"

VI.
"Nature wills otherwise," the Oak replied,
"However you may grumble;
The moment such a silly plan were tried,
Together we should tumble!

VII.
"Come you to me; and, taking Nature's course,
We 'll keep our proper places;
I to the twain will give my manly force,
And you your maiden graces.

VIII.
"But if, perverse, you try to live alone,
With none to hold and cherish
Your slender form—before you 're fairly grown,
You certainly will perish.

IX.
"Or if, instead of fondly clinging fast
To *one* who would protect you,
You flirt with others,—all the trees at last
Will scornfully reject you."

X.
"I see—I see!" exclaimed the musing Vine,
"The weaker must be nourished;"
Then clasped the Oak with many a graceful twine,
And so they grew and flourished!

BEETHOVEN.

BY JAMES PARTON.

In the last year of Mozart's life he received a visit one morning from a young man of eighteen, who brought a letter of introduction, which recommended him as a remarkably promising student of music, who wished to avail himself of the instruction of the greatest of living masters. After the usual exchange of compliments, Mozart invited the stranger to take a seat at the piano and give a taste of his quality. The young man hastened to comply, and struck at once into a brilliant improvisation. Mozart heard him with an indifference which he did not try to conceal, because he was sure that the piece played by the stranger was one that he had learned by heart and frequently practised. Wounded at this reception, the stranger begged Mozart to give him a theme of his own upon which he could improvise.

"Most willingly," replied Mozart; adding, in a lower tone, "I will set you a nice trap."

Mozart, taking his pen, wrote the theme for a fugue, which he invested with those difficulties which are employed in schools of music to exercise the most advanced pupils in the difficulties of composition. The young man saw the master's intention; but, although not yet master of all the resources of musical science, he developed the theme with so much power and originality that Mozart, careless at first, began to listen with attention; became completely absorbed; rose at length from his seat, and going into the next room, said to some of his friends assembled there:

"You see that young man; very well, one day he will make himself spoken of in the world."

And so it proved; for it was young Beethoven who thus brought himself to the notice of the master to whom he was most indebted. He was born in Bonn, in 1770—the son of a hard-drinking, dissolute tenor singer, and the grandson of an excellent Dutch musician who composed several operas, popular in their day, though now forgotten. Unlike Handel, Mozart and Haydn, Beethoven did not as a child show interest in his musical studies; but his father, who sang in the chapel of the Elector of Cologne, was obliged to force him to the piano, having it in view to exhibit his son as a musical prodigy, as the father of Mozart had recently done. Beethoven himself used to say that, in his childhood, he never went to the piano willingly, and showed an equal aversion to the violin. Nevertheless, he must have shown talent in some way, for when the bad habits of the father had reduced the family to extreme poverty, musicians of distinction gave him lessons gratuitously, and succeeded in overcoming the reluctance of the pupil to the practice of music.

At twelve years of age, he astonished all who heard him with the ease and correctness with which he performed the difficult music of Bach. Without having received any particular instruction in composition, he began to compose, and it was the great promise of his early efforts that induced Count Waldstein, a distinguished musical amateur, to become his protector and patron. Every child of genius needs such a friend. It was through the influence of this Count that Beethoven, when he was sixteen years of age, was appointed assistant organist to the Elector, and that, two years after, he was sent to Vienna, at the Elector's own expense, to receive instruction from Mozart.

From this time he made rapid progress, though he was sorely perplexed and hindered by the bad habits of his father, which threw upon him the support of two younger brothers. Soon after his coming of age, one of his brothers became a music-teacher, and the other an apothecary's boy, which released the young musician and enabled him to settle in Vienna, then the best school and the best field for a composer in Europe. At first he was known in Vienna only as an incomparable pianist. Before long, however, his published compositions raised him to a rank among the composers of his time, by the side of Mozart and Haydn. These few years of his early manhood were the happiest of his life; for although the pension allowed him was so small that we wonder how even a single man could have subsisted upon it, yet it sufficed for his needs, and enabled him to associate on equal terms with all that was most enlightened, refined and agreeable in Vienna. For one of his grand symphonies, the admiration of the musical world for sixty years, which cost him several weeks of intense exertion, he used to receive a sum equal to about eighty dollars in gold.

Brief was the happiness of this great man. Few men of genius have been more deeply or more variously afflicted than he. The gigantic wars of Napoleon, by destroying the Prince from whom he derived his pension, threw him wholly on his own resources, and the same events brought again upon him the charge of his two brothers, whose disputes and discontents imbittered his life. But his great misfortune—that which saddened all the remainder of his days—was his deafness, which began when he was twenty-eight years of age, and continued to increase until, at thirty-five, he was totally and incurably deaf. He used to attribute this disaster to the unskillful treatment of his case. His deafness almost reduced him to despair. It drove him from the society of men; for, strange to say, he was morbidly ashamed of his infirmity.

"It has been," he once wrote, "utterly impossible to say to people, 'Speak louder, scream, for I am deaf!' Ah! how could I proclaim the weakness of a sense which I ought to possess in a higher degree than others! which once I did possess, in the highest perfection—a perfection equalled by few of my profession."

Such was his depression of spirits that he would have terminated his existence but for the consolation which he derived from the practice of his vocation. His greatest works were produced when he was stone deaf—when he could only converse with others by the aid of a pencil. He used to compose while walking in the outskirts of Vienna, avoiding all who sought to accost him, and occasionally noting his musical ideas in a blank book which he always carried with him. In his happier days no one was fonder of society than he; but during the last thirty years of his life, he was only accessible to old and intimate friends. An English traveller, who saw him at Vienna in 1820, when Beethoven was fifty years of age, describes him thus:

"The neglect of his person which he exhibits, gives him a somewhat wild appearance. His features are strong and prominent; his eye is full of rude energy; his hair, which neither comb nor scissors seem to have visited for years, overshadows his broad brow in a quantity and confusion to which only the snakes around a gorgon's head offer a parallel. * * When playing very *piano*, he often does not bring out a single note; yet he hears it himself in the mind's ear. While his eye and the almost imperceptible motion of his fingers show that he is following out the strain in his own soul, through all its dying gradations, the instrument itself is actually as dumb as the musician is deaf."

It was no wonder that the people of Vienna, when they saw so strange and portentous a figure approaching, would stand aside awe-struck, and whisper to one another, "Here is Beethoven!"

His last years were further imbittered by a most miserable affair. One of his brothers, after plaguing him during his lifetime, left a son to his charge after his death. The mother of this son, a disreputable woman, would not give up the boy, and it cost the poor composer three or four lawsuits, and several years of trouble and expense, to rescue his nephew from her custody; and when he had got him, he proved utterly unworthy of his care.

It is remarkable that Beethoven's works, with all their abstruseness and difficulty, should have been so well appreciated in his own lifetime. Not even the brilliancy of Rossini's music could make the people of Vienna overlook, even for a single season, the colossal merits of the master. One of the greatest triumphs of his life was in 1824, when his Ninth Symphony was performed with a chorus—an original conception of Beethoven's. At the end of the symphony, the audience saluted him with, what a writer calls, "a thunder of bravos," which the composer alone, of all the vast assembly, could not hear. One of the lady singers took him by the hand, turned him toward the audience, and thus made him see the applause which he could not hear. The assembly rose and gave him cheer upon cheer.

Besides being afflicted with real sorrows, Beethoven tormented himself with an imaginary woe. While he had in his house a sum of money equal to five thousand dollars in gold, he was so much in fear of coming to want, that he wrote to a friend in London, begging him to induce the Philharmonic Society of that city to give a concert for his benefit. As soon as the Society was made acquainted with his wish, they sent him a hundred guineas, urging him to let them know if that sum was not sufficient for his needs. The master was so touched with this prompt generosity, that he began, at once, to sketch a new Symphony on a colossal scale, which he designed to present to the Society. He did not live to complete it. A rapid consumption soon deprived him of the power of labor. He said, in a quiet tone, when he discovered the fact:

"Applaud, my friends; the comedy is finished."

While he lay struggling with his last sickness, a crowd of visitors called daily to inquire concerning his health, among whom were many of the great personages of the empire. The last words which fell from his lips were addressed to a composer with whom he had been on ill terms for some years, but who had now travelled a long distance to be reconciled with the great master before he died.

"Well, Hummel," said he, "*had* I not some talent after all?"

He never spoke again. He died in March, 1827, aged fifty-seven years. Thirty thousand persons followed his body to the tomb, and statues have been erected to his memory both at Vienna and in his native city. After his death, his friends found in his house the ten thousand florins in coin which he had reserved for his old-age, the hundred guineas which the Philharmonic Society of London had sent him, and one hundred and twenty-five ducats for works already written, besides some contracts for music yet to be composed.

Value of the Property Destroyed by the Chicago Fire.

There has been a good deal of discussion as to the amount of property actually destroyed by the great fire in Chicago. Wild estimates have been made, and the spirit of exaggeration seems to have been too much for the arithmetic of most writers upon the subject. In a work entitled "Chicago and the Great Conflagration," by ELIAS COLBERT and EVERETT CHAMBERLAIN, we find that the total amount of loss by the fire, after a careful analysis and close sifting of the facts, is set down at one hundred and ninety-six millions of dollars. The same work contains a vast deal of other valuable information as to the settlement, rise, progress, destruction and rehabilitation of Chicago, which, considering all its vicissitudes, is really one of the most remarkable cities of the world.

Enormous Increase in Wealth.

The total wealth of the people of the United States in 1850 was seven billion one hundred and thirty-five million seven hundred and sixty thousand two hundred and twenty-eight dollars, ($7,135,760,228.) In 1860, it was sixteen billion one hundred and fifty-nine million six hundred and sixteen thousand and sixty-eight dollars, ($16,159,616,068.) And in 1870, notwithstanding our destructive war, it had risen to the vast sum of twenty-nine billion nine hundred and seventy-five million seven hundred and eighty-one thousand three hundred and ten dollars, ($29,975,781,310.)

Never, in the history of the world, has there been any other case of such rapid increase in the wealth of a people.

STARTLE'S PERFORMANCES.—There is a great deal of talk about the extraordinary performances of Mr. BONNER'S colt "Startle," and people are saying that he is the fastest horse in the world; but, it must be remembered, that *Dexter* has trotted a mile in public in 2:16, when Commodore VANDERBILT, Alderman GENET, SHEPHERD KNAPP and other well-known gentlemen timed him.

A Boy Sets Fire to a Keg of Gunpowder.

[From the Galena (Ill.) Gazette.]

A boy thirteen years of age was sent to burn some brush. Instead of obeying orders, he went into an unoccupied building near by, and went up stairs, where there was a full keg of powder, which had been placed there to be used in sinking a well. The boy turned out a handful of powder, and placing it not more than three feet from the keg, set it on fire. The keg not being stopped up, it took fire also, and the result was a fearful explosion. The boy was blown down stairs, and out of doors, into the mud, where he was found several hours afterward, with his face and left hand very badly burned and lacerated, and clothing partly burned off. His injuries are very severe. The building was badly riddled by the concussion. The roof parted in the centre, and was blown upward, but fell down again in a demoralized condition.

Woman's Rights—A Right Woman.

[From the New Bedford Mercury.]

Mrs. Randall, of Mattapoisett, 87 years old, wheeled a half bushel of potatoes two miles, one day last week, in order that a friend might be sure to have them in season for spring planting. This same woman cultivates an acre of land herself, with very little, if any, assistance.

THE OLD SWEET DREAM.

BY NATHAN D. URNER.

What dimpling smiles and happy tones
The rippling waters took,
As they foamed around the stepping-stones
That crossed the little brook!
Still, in my dreamful reverie lost,
The bowlders smooth I see,
This dark, that gray, that greenly mossed,
All swept by the waters free.

And there, where we paused in the maple's shade,
Above the glassy pool,
Where the rushing ripples sank and made
A mirror bright and cool;
Again in its depths I seem to look,
And see her gentle face,
And her form, as she stood by the running brook,
With its soft and girlish grace.

Again her voice, o'er the brook's rude tones,
In my ear sounds clear and sweet,
Again o'er the dripping stepping-stones
I guide her timid feet;
Again her little hand to my own
Clings with a pleasing fear,
As I lift her over the last broad stone
To the green bank rising near.

But ah! since then, like a doubtful dream,
Hath passed full many a year,
And the vision of love by the running stream
Is dimmed by the gathering tear;
For long hath the dear-loved voice been still,
The little hand long cold,
And, laid to rest in a grave on the hill,
The form of the loved of old.

But not all dark is the old sweet dream;
For the brook of the past so gray
May be but a type of the broader stream
Which we all must cross some day;
And the coming years be my stepping-stones
To that better and brighter shore,
To whose peace and rest with the good and blest
Her spirit hath crossed before.

MARK HEBER'S LUCK;

OR,

Life on the Plains.

By LEON LEWIS,

AUTHOR OF "THE BOY MAGICIAN," "RED KNIFE," "THE BROKEN HOME," "EDDY'S SEARCH," "THE CLUB-FOOT BEAR," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XXVII.

WITHIN BLUE JACK'S WIGWAM.

As the Devil Chief, otherwise Blue Jack, with his small party of five warriors, the half-breed lad, and the girl captive, rapidly approached the Indian village, which he had pointed out to Gay as her future home, signs of life and animation showed themselves in the little town. There were shouts and cries, a few Indian children came running out to greet the returning warriors, and the dogs set up loud barks of rejoicing.

The new-comers swept on into the village.

It was a collection of huts, or wigwams, built in conical shape, of poles, neatly covered with bark, and with an aperture at the top of each tent-shaped dwelling to permit the egress of smoke.

The village was laid out with some effort at regularity, with two wigwams of greater size and pretension in the very centre of the town.

The larger of these two huts was the dwelling of the chief Yako. The one beside it was the home of Yako's only child, the wife of the Devil Chief.

Blue Jack pressed forward with his young captive toward the centre of the village, but the population of men, women and children turned out, impeding his progress, and gazing with curious glances at Gay Heber, who returned their gaze with interest.

If she had ever cherished any romantic ideas concerning "the noble red man," her illusions were dispelled in that moment. The Indian warrior who so proudly sat his horse like a centaur of the plains, with keen, far-seeing eyes and crested head, all fire and fury as he rode upon the war-path, was here, in his lair, dirty, lazy and squalid.

The women, for the most part, were mere creatures of burden, with sad eyes like the eyes of overworked dumb beasts, old before their time.

Even the children were stolid, reticent beings, more like wooden images than children.

The Devil Chief greeted them all in their own tongue. He seemed a general favorite among them, and they made way for him with every sign of esteem, as he passed on to his own dwelling.

At the door of the largest hut, his own, the chief Yako was standing, smoking a pipe. The day was still warm, although the twilight was at hand, and his costume was of the airiest description, consisting only of a deer-skin trowsers covering his loins, and coming to his knees.

Blue Jack exchanged salutations with him, dismounting, and lifting Gay Heber from her saddle. The girl's feet were unconfined, and her captor, taking her by the arm, led her to his own dwelling.

The door was formed of a blanket, which completely concealed the interior of the wigwam. Blue Jack lifted the heavy folds with one hand, and pushed the captive into his house, following close behind her.

Gay Heber found herself in a room some twenty feet in diameter, with a broad stone hearth in the centre of the floor, upon which a fire was smouldering, the smoke ascending through the opening at the apex of the cone-shaped dwelling.

There were greater pretensions to neatness than Gay had expected to see. There was a floor to the wigwam, formed of smooth boards. There was a rudely constructed couch, draped with fox skins neatly sewed into a large blanket, and there was a small window, filled in with glass. So much for the civilization exhibited in the Indian home of Blue Jack.

His wife's education and tastes showed themselves in the heap of soft skins that served as her couch in a further corner; in the huge pieces of buffalo flesh and other game strung upon strings and suspended in the smoke of the fire to dry; in the pile of exquisitely tanned deer-skins, and wooden bowl of beads and colored silk flosses; and finally, in the big mortar and pestle, both of wood, which were used in pounding grain.

As Gay looked around her wonderingly, a figure stirred itself among the shadows of the furthest corner, and came hurriedly toward the intruders.

This was the figure of Blue Jack's Indian wife.

She was young, being scarcely more than twenty, and answered more fully to Gay's ideal of an Indian girl than any one whom she had yet seen.

She was tall and slender, lithe and graceful as a willow. Her complexion was that of her people, copper color, and she had the high cheek-bones of her race, but her eyes were large, black, and shaped like almonds; her long hair, black as night, was brushed smoothly from her forehead, filleted with a slender band of shining gold like a tiara—Blue Jack's gift—and fell in dusky waves over her shoulders. She was spirited, jealous, handsome, devoted to her white husband, whom she considered the most glorious of warriors, the wisest in counsel, and the favored son of the Great Spirit.

Her dress was strikingly picturesque. She wore tiny moccasins, lavishly embroidered with birds' quills prettily colored, and with gay beads, embroidered leggings of deer-skin, and a tunic or dress that came to her knees, edged with a broad embroidery, and fringed with the dyed feathers of prairie birds. This dress was confined at the waist by a belt, embroidered like the rest. Her arms were bare from the shoulder, and were decorated with bracelets of gold. She looked, as she was, like some barbarian princess, haughty and proud; yet she was a very spaniel to her white husband.

Blue Jack spoke to her in her own tongue, and she bounded forward to his arms. He kissed her as he might have kissed a white wife, and drew the dusky, perfumed lengths of her wavy hair through his hands, and patted her cheek, and displayed an actual fondness for her.

"Look up, Neonta," he said at last, in English. "I have brought a companion for you."

The Indian wife looked up from her husband's shoulder with a start, and regarded Gay Heber with great jealous eyes, in which a sullen anger suddenly flamed.

The pale face, with its dainty, primrose loveliness, the pure brown eyes, full of saucy sweetness, the small head with short cropped tresses, presented a new type of beauty to the consideration of the Indian wife, and one with which she was by no means pleased to contrast herself.

"Who is she?" asked Blue Jack's wife, also speaking English.

"What, have you forgotten, Neonta?" demanded the Devil Chief. "She is my daughter, of whom I told you—she is the girl Gay Heber."

Neonta's face softened a little.

"She doesn't look like you," she said. "I don't like her."

"You need not like her," answered Blue Jack, laughing. "But you will give her shelter, Neonta, for my sake, will you not?"

The Indian wife hesitated, and then said abruptly, addressing Gay Heber:

"Are you the daughter of the great Devil Chief?"

"He says so," answered Gay.

"And do you like him?"

Gay's saucy lips curled in contempt, and there was no mistaking her sincerity, as she answered:

"No, indeed. I like better the wolves of the plains—the rattlesnakes that warn as they strike—any venomous brute beast, better than he."

The Indian wife's face lightened of its gloom.

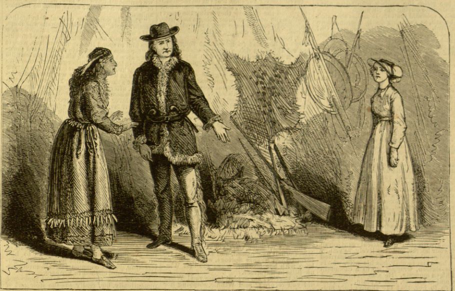
"Did your mother look like you?" she asked.

Gay answered in the affirmative.

"Did the Devil Chief love her?"

"No; he killed her," answered Gay.

Neonta was content. The demon of her jealousy was quieted. But Gay's bitter answer to her last question brought a sudden glow to Blue Jack's face, and he exclaimed:



BLUE JACK INTRODUCING GAY HEBER TO HIS INDIAN WIFE.

"That unguarded remark of yours, my young lady, is a virtual confession that you are the child of the crazy wanderer I've been telling you about. But I knew you were, and the confession makes but little difference either way. My wife Neonta here is your step-mother, and your mistress. You will do well not to anger her. Sit down on yonder heap of skins."

He pointed to the heap in question, and Gay sat down upon them.

Blue Jack flung himself upon the rude couch or lounge, and Neonta bent over him, fondling and caressing him, the two talking meanwhile in the Dacota tongue.

Gay Heber knew from their frequent glances at her, that their discussion concerned herself.

At length the Devil Chief called for his supper, and Neonta, now in high good-humor, proceeded to prepare it. She went out of doors, presently returning with some freshly killed game, antelope meat and birds prepared for the fire. The birds she wrapped in leaves and buried in the hot ashes, heaping live coals upon the ashes. The meat she toasted upon a long fork over the fire.

Gay Heber watched the process of cooking. Neonta was clean and neat in her operations, having been trained in the desirable qualities of cleanliness and neatness by her white husband. The savory odors of the game filled the room. When the meat was cooked sufficiently, Neonta deposited it upon wooden dishes, and brought a basket of hard biscuits, a bottle of pickled cucumbers, and a bottle of wine, all the fruits of plunder of wagon trains, and appropriated to his own use by Blue Jack, who liked the freedom of savage life better than its hard, coarse, monotonous fare.

"Come forward and help yourself, Gay," said Blue Jack lazily. "You look hungry, and you don't eat enough any day to keep a bird alive."

Thus invited, and being really hungry, Gay Heber approached and helped herself to the biscuits, or crackers, and a piece of roasted bird, and went back to her heap of skins and ate her repast in silence.

Neonta shared her husband's meal, contrary to the practice of most Indian wives, who wait submissively for the fragments of the feast.

After the supper, Blue Jack lighted his pipe and went forth to the society of the chief and of the warriors. Neonta cleared away the remnants of the meal, and sat down before the hearth and watched Gay Heber, who silently returned the stare.

The soul of the young girl was heavy within her. A life in the wigwam in this remote Indian village seemed to her worse than death.

"You shall be Neonta's slave," said the Indian wife, after a long silence. "The Devil Chief says that you shall fetch water, pound the corn, cook the meat, and bring wood for the fire for Neonta. Neonta is glad you have come."

Gay Heber did not answer.

"The great chief says you must be watched both day and night," continued Neonta. "We have dogs, and I have eyes as keen as the eyes of a hawk. But the great chief will put a stake in the ground in the corner yonder, and every night the pale-faced girl shall be tied to the stake and a dog shall guard her."

Still Gay was silent, and Neonta, tiring of so unresponsive a listener, couched before the fire, singing softly some Indian song, and watching the girl with big bright eyes, that never faltered in their gaze.

The twilight deepened without, and the wigwam was filling with shadows. Neonta at last arose and laid knots of pitch pine upon the hearth, and these flamed up and filled the cone-shaped room with a great warm light and a delicious resinous fragrance.

A little later Blue Jack came in, bringing with him a tall young warrior, with long black locks well greased, and garments of deer-skin embroidered, and a long plume waving above his forehead. He wore a scarlet blanket over his shoulders and large gold hoops in his ears, and was withal a fine specimen of the Indian dandy.

The Devil Chief and his visitor squatted down before the hearth and smoked their pipes, saying little.

Gay Heber watched them from her corner.

The Indian dandy's gaze wandered about the room, and settled upon the young captive. His dull eyes brightened a little. He watched her as he continued to smoke, and presently he said something to Blue Jack in the Dacota language. The white outlaw replied to him briefly.

There was another silence, and the Dacota spoke again, as briefly as before.

Blue Jack beckoned to Gay to approach.

"Come here," he said, removing his pipe from his mouth. "This is Lenno, one of the young braves, the son of a chief. He will be a great warrior some day. Come this way, Gay, and let him see you."

"If he wants to see me, let him look this way," returned Gay coolly. "I am not your slave yet, Mr. Blue Jack."

The outlaw's face flushed angrily.

"If you know when you're well off, you'll curb that proud spirit of yours," he exclaimed. "You'd better try to gain friends than to make enemies."

"Can a father hate his daughter?" asked Gay, with ironical emphasis. "We won't talk of friendship, Mr. Blue Jack. It would be rather ridiculous, after you have made war upon my friends, and treated me as some object of lawful prey, to talk of friendship now. I don't want your friendship. Your friendship for me would be only masked hatred!"

"The pale-faced girl carries a bold tongue," murmured Neonta, frowning.

"The pale-faced girl has much spirit," said the Dacota dandy. "Lenno likes her. She is like the flower of the prairies, very sweet and very beautiful. Her voice is so like the singing of waters over pebbles. Her eyes are like the stars. Lenno's eyes love to dwell upon her. What will the Devil Chief do with his pale-faced daughter?"

"I don't know," said Blue Jack, puffing upward a cloud of smoke. "A grown-up daughter like that is rather in one's way, Lenno. Neonta don't like the girl to be here."

"Lenno likes her," repeated the Dacota dandy. "Lenno has no wife among the daughters of his people. The Indian maidens have smiled upon him, but his heart was cold. The Indian maidens have sung songs to him, but Lenno's ears were silent to their music. They have spoken to him, but he did not answer. Lenno is the son of a great chief, and will be powerful. His enemies run now and hide when they hear his name. The warriors of other tribes tremble like leaves in the wind when they hear that Lenno is on the war-path, and when Lenno draws near they sing their death-songs."

"Lenno speaks truth," said Blue Jack gravely.

"But great and terrible as is Lenno," continued the young brave, "his heart is lonely. He is like the birds in spring time. He wants a mate. Will the Devil Chief give his daughter to Lenno for his wife? Let the Devil Chief speak."

Blue Jack reflected. He saw before him an opportunity to rid himself forever of Gay Heber. He dared not marry her to one of his white allies, who might set himself to work to solve the mystery surrounding her identity. He hated Gay with an absolute hatred. He feared her. Her refusal to believe that she was his daughter added to his alarm. What might she not suspect? How near to the truth might she not arrive, in her efforts to solve his secret?

"The truth is, she's dangerous to me," he thought, wiping his wet forehead. "She's too keen and bright to be left around loose. I can't kill her in cold blood—I wish I could. But if I marry her to an Indian, she will be virtually dead. The drudgery of an Indian wigwam would soon kill her, if her loathing for her husband did not. If I leave her here unmarried, she may escape in the course of years, or be rescued. I want her out of my way. She shall marry Lenno."

His decision might be read in his face, as he said aloud:

"Lenno does me honor. I had not thought of marriage for my daughter. I looked upon her as a child, but Lenno has opened my eyes. My daughter is a maiden as old as was Neonta when I married her. The words of Lenno are pleasant to my ears. My daughter shall be the wife of Lenno, and shall keep his wigwam."

"The Devil Chief talks wisdom," said Neonta.

"The Devil Chief is great," muttered Lenno, "and his people love him. He is great in war, great in council. Lenno will be good to his pale-faced bride."

Blue Jack turned his evilly glowing eyes upon Gay, who had listened to the whole conversation in a sort of stupor.

"Do you understand, Gay?" he cried out to her, in a mocking voice. "The young brave Lenno has made proposals to me, as your father, for your hand in marriage. He has fallen in love with you at sight. These passionate Bedouins of the plains do not need months of friendly intercourse to assure them whether they like a girl or not. They know at first sight whether she is pleasant in their eyes, and that is all that is required. Mind and soul are not wanted in a wife. They do not know what is meant by uncongeniality of disposition, for there is but one ruler to a wigwam, and he is the husband. You see for yourself that Lenno is young and handsome, and that he wears brave apparel. He will give you a fine wigwam, and plenty of game to cook. He has fields of corn and of grain, and, like Nimrod, he is a 'mighty hunter.' The match is one not unworthy the consideration of even my daughter. I am Indian by adoption, and I desire my daughter to marry an Indian. What have you to say?"

"I say that this jesting is foolish—wicked," said Gay.

"You think it jest, eh? It's bitter earnest, as you'll discover," cried Blue Jack. "You shall marry Lenno. He will not care for your consent, since he has mine."

"The Devil Chief talks truth," said Lenno calmly. "Lenno will not care. Lenno will get ready his wigwam for his bride. Shall he have her in one moon?"

"Yes, in one moon—one month from this very day," affirmed Blue Jack. "Your bride shall be ready for you, Lenno. In the mean time she shall be guarded closely. She'll be on hand on her wedding-day, I'll warrant."

The brave and the Devil Chief smoked a pipe, the one after the other, in token that the compact was sealed.

"You can come in any day and court the girl," said Blue Jack. "She'll be loving enough, Lenno, after a while, but white maidens are always shy with their lovers. It is settled."

He arose and went out, returning presently with a log like a post, and an ax and spade. Going into the corner of the hut farthest from the door, he pulled up a plank in the floor, and proceeded to dig a hole in the ground, some two feet in depth. Into this he thrust the log upright, and then filled in the soil closely, packing it hard.

There was an iron staple and ring already made fast to the log, which had probably served as a post for hitching horses to. Blue Jack tied a long leathern strap into this ring, and secured the other end around Gay's waist. He then lashed her hands together.

"Now let's see you attempt an escape," he said. "You are safe for to-night. In the day-time you can have personal freedom to a certain extent, but I prefer to know that you are safe while I sleep. One word more, Gabrielle. This marriage of yours is a fixed fact. I don't intend to keep you here in captivity, watching you day and night, over a month longer. Lenno shall take you off my hands. By all that you deem holy, I swear that you shall be his wife!"

The sinister eyes of her enemy flamed with evil jubilance; his coarse lips wreathed themselves in a cruelly exultant smile. For the first time in all her young life, Gay Heber experienced an utter despair. Her horrible doom was fixed by her enemy, and she could see no way of escape. It seemed to her that Mark would not get to her in time to save her.

"If Mark does not find me," she thought hopelessly, "I shall die. God help me! Better death than the fate they have marked out for me!"

She crouched upon the ground, and buried her face in her manacled hands.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

MARK'S ACTION IN THE MATTER.

During all these days of Gay's toilsome marches and horrible captivity, where was Mark Heber?

As the reader knows, the alarm had been sounded from the swivel gun at the settlement, almost directly after the five savages and the half-breed lad, with their girl captive, had taken flight to the northward.

The look-out upon the block-house had witnessed the appearance of the two Indians from the shelter of the grove, and their attack upon Will Whitman, and had been momentarily paralyzed by the peril of Gay Heber and her young companion; but, recovering himself, had fired the signal of danger, recalling the settlers to the fort.

They came trooping in by ones and twos and threes, finding the settlement in a state of confusion, the women and children overwhelmed with terror. The pupils had run out from the school-room, the people from their houses, and all were apprehensive of an attack by Indians, not clearly comprehending what had happened.

One of the first to rush into the stockade, his farm being nearest upon one side, was Mark Heber. He had his rifle in hand, and demanded of the first person whom he met what had happened.

"The Indians! The Indians!" was the frightened answer, the only one he could elicit.

Mark did not wait to question another, but dashed on to the block-house, up the ladders, to the roof.

The look-out had returned to his post, holding his glass in an unsteady hand.

"What's up?" cried Mark. "Do you see any Indians?"

"Yes, up at the grove yonder—the five-mile grove. They've dodged back now. They've shot one of our men—"

"One at work in the fields? It must be Knox—"

"No; there's a young man and a girl gone up to the five-mile grove in your sister's canoe. The girl's gone, and the young man's shot and fallen over into the river."

Mark Heber sprang to the low stone parapet on the edge of the block-house roof, and looked down upon the square, into which the people were thronging. His own house was closed, and looked deserted. A horrible glimmering of the truth came to him.

"Who went up the river in the canoe?" he shouted.

Mrs. Whitman answered him, in a sobbing, affrighted voice:

"My son Will and your sister, Mark Heber. What has happened to them?"

"God in heaven!" cried Mark Heber, his face growing white. "Indians! Gay!"

He caught up his rifle, and flew down the ladders like one demented. He rushed across the square to the shed behind his house, and saddled and bridled his horse.

Mr. Whitman came in, Amory, Halsey, Hopkins and others, and still others. The excitement deepened. Mrs. Whitman told her story. The look-out upon the block-house roof leaned over the parapet, and told what he had seen in a breathless manner.

When Mark Heber appeared, Mr. Whitman and several others of the settlers were saddling their horses. Mark would have set off alone, but he was restrained. The settlers still came hurrying in, and those who came last found horses in readiness for their use.

It seemed an interminable period to young Heber before the settlers were ready, and the order to march was given. But at last the little body left the fort, and the great gates clanged shut behind them, and the small guard that remained at the settlement mounted to the platform of the stockade and the roof of the block-house, armed with spy-glasses and rifles.

Mark led the way, his horse seeming to share his impatience. The party swept on like a whirlwind. Mark Heber did not speak once upon the mad ride, but his wild eyes, his white face, the rigid lines on his countenance, his rigid, bloodless lips, told of the anguish raging in his soul. No one spoke to him. The sight of his face was enough to still even the boldest tongue that would have addressed him.

Mile after mile flew past, and they neared the five-mile grove, Mark Heber still in advance. Suddenly he swerved from his course, and urged his horse to the river's edge.

He had beheld the little canoe in the stream, and a hatless figure, drenched to the skin, with a white, scared face, within it, wielding the paddle. He recognized the strange figure as that of Will Whitman.

"Hallo, there!" he cried, his eyes blazing. "Is Gay in the boat with you?"

Young Whitman shook his head, and pointed to the northward.

Like a thunderbolt, Mark Heber swept on, without another word.

Mr. Whitman and the other settlers swerved aside from their course as Mark had done, and also spoke to Will. The father's joy at beholding alive the son he had believed dead may be imagined. His heart yearned over him; his eyes filled with tears; but that was no time for explanations or congratulations.

"Go on to your mother," cried Mr. Whitman, his voice choking. "And now, men," he added, "come on. We must recover the girl."

Leaving young Whitman to drift down the river in the current, the party spurred on.

Mark Heber was first at the five-mile grove, and had dashed through it with mad recklessness and come out upon its northern side before the others reached the southern side.

The Indians and their captive were gone.

Mark's eagle gaze swept the plains. To the northward he saw the retreating savages, nearly half a score of miles away, and with a loud shout to his friends he hurried on in swift pursuit.

The settlers followed him at full speed. They rode that afternoon, and during the moonlit night that followed, giving themselves and their horses brief chance to rest. It will be remembered that Gay and her captors rode all night. The horses of the savages were all picked animals, of a grade superior to the ordinary farm horses of the settlers, and the former had, besides, extra steeds, a precaution the pioneers had failed to take.

Upon the following morning, having failed to overtake the Indians, as they had expected to do, and being nearly worn out, Mr. Whitman ordered a halt. The horses were picketed, and the men, hungry and exhausted, threw themselves upon the ground. Mr. Whitman had bethought himself to bring a bag of bread, and another of cold meat, gathered together by the settlers' wives, and these were distributed in rations. Upon the previous day the men had eaten in their saddles, without stopping for water to quench their thirst.

They rested several hours, and then took to the saddle again. They kept easily to the trail of Gay's captors, and knew whenever a halt had been made. They rode for the most part in grim silence. They passed through the country of the Pawnee Indians, and upon the third day they reached the southern extremity of the Great Sand Hills.

Here Mr. Whitman again commanded a halt, and looked at his friends with a gloomy face.

"The savages are out of sight," he exclaimed. "We've seen nothing of them since the first day. Their trail leads over the Great Sand Hills. They have gone into the Dacota country. It's a journey of over two hundred miles from our settlement. We are out of provisions. We cannot overtake the savages, who are few in number. Where is the rest of the large body who destroyed our settlement last month? They may be taking advantage of our absence to make another assault on the fort."

"The Sioux number some eight thousand people," said Mr. Halsey. "We cannot overtake the party who have captured Heber's sister, and shall we pit ourselves against a population of eight thousand persons, in our hope to recover the girl? We are pursuing a career of madness. Heaven only knows what is happening to our families in our absence. Let us go back and bring soldiers to rescue the girl."

"There is nothing else to be done," said Mr. Knox despondingly. "We must go back. Out of food, our families unprotected, the fort ungarrisoned, it is our duty to return."

This was the general sentiment.

"Go back then!" cried Mark Heber. "But *I* cannot go back. I will not lose so much time. Perhaps they have killed her. God alone knows what she suffers. She expects me to save her, to come for her, and I am going."

"But, Mark," said Mr. Whitman, "this is madness. You must not go alone. You are liable to meet warriors, or to perish by the way. You cannot travel hundreds of miles alone, to give battle to a thousand warlike Sioux. You must go back with us, and you can then return with the soldiers."

"I will not go back," said Mark Heber firmly. "What! turn my back upon little Gay—little suffering, brave-souled Gay? Put days between us? No, Mr. Whitman, I cannot do it. I'll save her, or I'll die for her. Go back, all of you, to the fort. Send a messenger to Fort McPherson, that troops may be sent in this direction—"

Mr. Whitman shook his head sorrowfully.

"I had forgotten, Mark," he said, "but they won't send soldiers from Fort McPherson on a round journey of toward five hundred miles. The times are troubled, what with the war in the States, and Indian troubles in Texas and elsewhere. I doubt if we can get any soldiers at all at this time, to attempt Gay's rescue."

Mark's face grew yet whiter.

"The more reason why I should go on, then," he said.

Mr. Whitman drew the young man aside, and said to him, in a low tone:

"There's another difficulty, Mark, that just occurs to me. You will have to explain the whole circumstances of Gay's capture, and the cause of it. It will come out that Blue Jack, the Devil Chief of the Dacotas, is, in all probability, and to the best of your belief, the girl's own father! Now, a father has a right to the custody of his minor child, and one hint of this relationship between Blue Jack and Gay Heber—and such a hint it seems impossible to keep back, in a truthful narration of events—will prevent any commandant from sending forth a single soldier to the girl's rescue. The government has too much serious business for troops, they will say, to send soldiers to interfere in what they are likely to term a family squabble. Mark, from my soul, I pity you. I cannot abandon poor little Gay to her fate without pangs, such as I would feel in like case if it were one of my own children. But you see we can't go on further, Mark. And you see also, that we can't send up soldiers from Fort McPherson."

"I see," said Mark, with the calmness of desperation. "If help can be got at any fort, it will be either at Fort Sully or Fort Pierre, which are nearest the Sioux country. But you think that when they know the whole story they will decline to interfere? You have been very good to me to come so far, Mr. Whitman, and I own that there may be danger menacing the settlement in your absence. You and the others must go back. God bless you for your kindness to me in my trouble!"

"And will you abandon the project of going up into the Sioux country?" asked Mr. Whitman anxiously.

Mark Heber shook his head.

"My life is worth nothing to me without *her*," he said with simple pathos. "I must follow her. I have plenty of ammunition, a revolver, rifle, and hunting-knife. I have no fear. I must go on."

The settlers in vain tried to dissuade the youth from his purpose, but it was fixed and immovable.

"If you must go then," said Halsey, "here's my match box and revolver and shot pouch. Take them, Heber. I'm afraid that the half-breed lad I picked up on the way home from Colorado is a viper, a treacherous hound, and that we owe all our trouble to him. I'll let this teach me to be guarded next time. Forgive me, Mark, if it turns out that I have brought this trouble upon you through taking in the half-breed; and shoot him for me, Mark, if you ever get the chance."

Mark accepted Halsey's gifts. He might need them.

Other match boxes were offered him, and he was plentifully supplied with them. He refused the revolvers and rifles which were freely proffered him.

"We part here," he said. "I believe and trust that no harm has come to the fort in our absence. I shall never come back to the settlement unless I rescue Gay and bring her with me. You will see both of us, or neither."

He shook hands with Mr. Whitman and the others, one by one, and then touched his horse with his whip and rode away from them into the barren waste of the Great Sand Hills.

The settlers sat their horses motionless, and looked after him with sad faces.

"There goes as gallant a young fellow as ever drew breath," said Mr. Whitman, shading his eyes with one hand, "and he is riding to his death."

"Yes," said Mr. Knox sorrowfully. "He's plunging into dangers of which he does not dream. Poor boy! He feels his sister's fate terribly. He looked like death when he rode off alone into the sandy waste. We shall never see him again!"

The settlers wheeled in silence, and rode on their homeward way.

And Mark Heber pursued his journey alone. He rode into the shining sands, keeping to the trail of the savages. Half an hour after parting with his friends he espied an antelope in his very path, and he fired, killing it. He dismounted, and picketed his horse. A small creek, nearly dry, a branch of the Pawnee Loup river, was close at hand, with a fringe of willows on its banks.

Mark made a fire and roasted a goodly portion of the choice parts of the meat. He made a hearty meal off it, and put what remained into his saddle-bags. He then remounted, and pressed on.

This was about the middle of the afternoon. At nightfall Mark again dismounted, and made his solitary bivouac upon the sandy waste. How deathly still all was around him! There were no birds with their music, no coyotes, no antelopes, nor buffaloes, nothing that had life, except himself and his horse, for he had left vegetation behind him. Far and near was a silence like death, and the shadows that began to fall softly made Mark think of a death-pall.

Mark picketed his horse in the sands, and gave him some grass he had brought for him, and patted him gently, feeling some sort of companionship in the society of even the dumb beast.

Then he sat down in the warm sands, and gave himself up to thoughts of Gay.

He forgot himself, his whereabouts, his solitude, in thinking of her perils, and was only recalled to himself and his surroundings at last by a startled neigh from his horse, and the sudden change of attitude as the animal arose to his feet, pricking up his ears.

Arising hastily, Mark beheld, coming from the westward, a party of three men, all mounted, and riding directly toward him.

In the full glow of moonlight and starlight, Mark recognized them at once as white men.

"Hallo, you, there!" cried one of the men loudly, coming on in advance of the others. "Who's this alone on the sand hills?"

Mark recognized the voice with sudden comprehension of his danger. He knew at once the members of the party advancing upon him.

They were three of the outlaws who had been in the wagon train with Burk and Blue Jack. They had gone on to Denver with the train, and were now on their way up to the Sioux country to rejoin the Devil Chief. These outlaws had shared Burk's hatred of our young hero, and he would have preferred to encounter three red savages than them. He did not reply to them.

"Can't you speak?" cried the desperado who came on in advance. "Who are you? By Jingo! boys, if it an't that pert young Heber of the wagon train! What's he doing here? Blue Jack hates him wuss'n pizen! Tell you, boys, we'll capture him and take him up to Blue Jack; blest if we don't! Come on!"

The men yelled approvingly in concert and dashed on together toward the youth, who stood and faced them, stern and fixed as a rock!

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

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CROSSING THE OCEAN.

BY MARY KYLE DALLAS.

What a strange thing it is to think about! When once tickets are bought and state-rooms secured, and all those trunks packed—for a novice will always take an immense wardrobe to Europe, forgetting how much easier it would be to take only a couple of dresses and some linen, and buy the rest abroad—when lying in one's quiet bed at night, the thought that on the morrow there will be only a few planks between us and the wilderness of waters we call the sea; that our lives will be merely a question of watchfulness on the part of the engineer and of resistance on the part of the boiler; that a storm may wreck the vessel, and a careless cigar burn it to the hulk; that at least we shall be seasick and weary and worn—and "O dear!" cries many a pitiful voice of waking womanhood. "Do please take back our tickets, love, and say you won't go, because I'm afraid."

People generally do go, having once paid for the passage, however, and the carriage rattles down to the pier, and there she lies—"White Dove," or "Queen of the Sea," "Stormy Petrel," or whatever she may be, who is to bear us in her bosom to lands afar. At a distance she looks small, quite disappointing, in fact; but once on board an ocean steamer, what woman ever failed to cry, "How tremendous!"

Good-bye! good-bye! The handkerchiefs wave from the pier. Tears are shed; hearts beat with the passionate pain of parting. Again the woman longs to remain at home, but the throb, throb, throb of the vessel's heart has begun. The land seems to retreat. It is the pier, the friends standing upon it, the crowd of emigrants and loungers appertaining to the Battery, the Battery and Castle Garden themselves, which sail away from us; and ere we feel that it can be so, there is only a dark line beyond the white sea-foam given to sight of home.

That first meal at sea—who forgets it? No one is seasick yet. Every one is hungry. Things seem unnecessarily secured to the table, but it is all the more amusing. And we make up our minds whom we shall like, and whom we shall dislike.

That plump lady with dimples in her cheeks and chin we mean to know, if possible. That dogmatical man of cadaverous countenance, who doubtless is possessed of an ism of some kind, we shall avoid. We like the captain, but we detest the first officer; and of the waiters one little mulatto has our liking—so handy, so lively, so obliging.

The sun is going down when we step on deck. The young married couple stand looking over the side, with his arm about her waist, to the great scandal of the single lady from Boston who travels alone, and prides herself on wearing no chignon, though the little round onion-like knob at the back of her head makes one doubt whether, after all, those inventions of the Evil One may not have their advantages.

Old married people walk the deck in amicable mood. The dogmatical man regards all present with silent scorn, and makes notes in a little book. The children begin to find it hard to keep their feet on deck. One freckled face nurse-girl turns slowly white, and the freckles start out upon her face like black ink dots. She retires below, howling as she vanishes, "Why did I come in it at all at all?" and one pities the mother who relies upon her assistance during the voyage.

Such a splendid motion. It makes one catch the breath, as swinging does. Nothing more delightful. So dreamily delicious! so— Oh! The pudding must have been too rich. Something—has—disagreed.

And then comes the state-room, its gilt magnificence quite forgotten, a sympathizing chambermaid, a glass of brandy and water, which makes one worse, and— O dear! if this is going to sea, Dickens' old lady who desired that there should be "no meandering," was very, very sensible.

Inexperienced womanhood begs to see the partner of its joys and sorrows, for it is going to die.

Chambermaid, rendered doubly sympathetic by the gift of a dollar from said anxious partner outside the doors, says:

"Now chirk up, lady—do. Keep up yer sperits. No lady never died of being seasick yet. Get over it in no time. Bless ye, for a pretty little soul as you are! Old Nancy knows; she's sailed the sea twenty year, or more. Arter a while you'll laugh at it."

It is a good while before you laugh though. Vague fears that after all it is *not* seasickness but poison, affect you; doubts that you will ever eat again; but you come to that at last, and to the deck. Where are those spruce and smiling passengers who took their first dinner with you? Gone. In their place a miserable, white-faced, slimpsy—forgive the Yankeeism, it expresses what I mean so well—slimpsy group of convalescents in shawls, languidly breathing the fresh sea air.

Only the single lady from Boston appears to be quite herself. You find her holding an argument with the dogmatical gentleman who is your horror, and is as lively, as yellow and as chignonless as ever. The newly married man, who is just twenty, has his wife, who is perhaps sixteen, wrapped up in a cachmere shawl like a mummy. He also has expected to die, and so has she, that is plain. He is so attentive to her, that the Boston lady proposes to the dogmatical gentleman to go to the other side of the deck. She refusing to take his arm, he takes her by the shoulder, at arm's-length, with a long clutch, and so propels her, in bolt upright, flat-backed awfulness.

You hear afterward that he is Professor Ginx, and that she is Miss Bonebury, who lectures on woman's rights. There is an actress on board, who has an attendant train of gentlemen, all so attentive that you only recognize the fact that one is her husband by noticing his complete exclusion from all her fascinating smiles and glances, and remarking that she never answers him, whatever he may say. The newly married man is heard after a time to remark, of that other married man whose wife is an actress:

"I wouldn't be treated so mean by any wife of mine. I'd assert my dignity."

American gentleman going over on business; English gentleman returning home. Everybody and his wife travelling for pleasure. After a while they become known by name. Mr. Bull, Mr. Davids, Mr. and Mrs. Smith, Brown and Robinson. Friendships are soon formed on the sea; but the Boston lady ceases to patronize you with her conversation after you have replied to her "Is it possible that you don't desire female suffrage, mum?" in the negative.

It is a little world for the time being, that steamer with its living freight. It sails upon ocean's space, with no land anywhere in sight. The sun seems to rise for it and to set for it alone. The moon shines to give it light. A feeling of loneliness and mystery, which might easily become one of horror, settles down upon the heart.

What a day that is when another steamer is "spoken!" What an event! How it draws the passengers together! And those hours of storm—haply brief—who can ever forget them? The heaving and rolling of the great steamer; the new qualms of sickness; the noises in the engine-room and on deck; the voices of those in command; the hurry of feet; the fearful throb, throb, throb in the heart of our ocean home!

Forbidden the deck—where, despite the rain and wind, in defiance of all danger, the passengers would flock at once, in their deadly fear of going down in that cabin prison—we sit and stare at nothing, or talk to each other, each after his own fashion. Most of the women are sure that they are going down. Most of the men say that they have seen worse storms than this. Until at last the waves beat less furiously, the noises on board grow less, and the captain's handsome brown face appears at the cabin door, and his voice gives new comfort.

"Why, bless your hearts, ladies; not frightened, I hope? The gale is over. 'Twasn't worth talking of either; and as soon as the deck is dry enough, it will do you good to see the sunset."

Then those who think it good to give thanksgiving, must do it, if in silence. Thank God for being safe again.

So, with still days, when blue sky meets dark ocean; with days when white flocks of clouds rush over us, and garments flare and flutter as we stand on deck; and other days, when the patter of bleak rain is heard upon the deck, and the usual spectacle of sunset is not to be had, we cross the ocean. We near another land. White cliffs arise in view, the masts of vessels, the flutter of strange flags; and little boats lie at the feet of the sea monster who has borne us safely over the weltering waste of waters, and beyond is England.

Adieu to the friendships so easily formed—so easily broken! Good-bye, little married pair, with a nod and smile and dimple. Good-bye, Mr. Bull, with the flaxen curls and mighty person, who so despises America, but who has been so friendly. Adieu to Mr. Davids, with the dreamy oriental eyes and glossy ebon hair, who will not stop in England, and who will probably smuggle diamonds on his homeward voyage. Adieu to Messrs. Smith, Brown and Robinson and their ladies; and good-bye to Miss Bonebury and Mr. Ginx.

The last you see of them, she is walking, straight and flat-backed, up the planks that connect the vessel with the shore; and he, holding her at arm's-length in his bony clutch, is steering her; and both their backs express an awful purpose of lecturing and making notes. And the shore seems to rise and fall under your feet, as the deck has done so long, and your ocean voyage is over.

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Maxims on Money.

The art of living easily as to money, is to pitch your scale of living one degree below your means. Guard against the notion that because pleasure can be purchased with money, therefore money cannot be spent without enjoyment. What a thing costs a man is no true measure of what it is worth to him; and yet how often is his appreciation governed by no other standard, as if there were a pleasure in expenditure *per se*. Let yourself feel a want before you provide against it. You are more assured that it is a real want; and it is worth while to feel it a little, in order to feel the relief from it. When you are undecided which of two courses you would like best, choose the cheapest. This rule will not only save money, but save also a good deal of trifling indecision.

THE CLICK OF A PISTOL.

BY MATHILDE ESTVAN.

Carrie Cornell was a very pretty girl, and considered the belle of the circle in which she moved. She was also a kind, good girl, but had unhappily one fault, which not seldom threw all her good qualities into the shade. She was too easily misled by appearances, and would fancy most incredible stories at the slightest suggestion. Her imagination seemed like that of a good novelist, always ready to grasp a chance word and turn it into a story. Anything out of the common line of events was to her most delightful. But her worst mistake was, that she called her life dull and uninteresting because it flowed calmly and peacefully.

Having never yet shed tears of bitter disappointment and sorrow, she did not know how they blind the eye, how they wring the heart; she thought only how interesting a sad, pale, melancholy countenance was, and would often look with real disgust at her round, dimpled, rosy cheeks.

One of her best friends—what young girl has not at least a dozen *best* friends?—was a silly, good-natured damsel, who never took the trouble of having an own opinion, but always adopted those of others.

This Winnie Bliss was a great comfort to Carrie, as she was at any time ready to grieve with her that nothing would occur to change the monotony of her existence. It was really as if Fate had determined not to throw a pebble in Carrie's path, and that "the course of true love seldom runs smoothly" could not even be applied to her case, as the course of hers did flow as calmly as the waters of a lake in a summer day.

Engaged to a young man who had known her when she was a child, and to whom her brother was happy to intrust his sister—her parents were long since dead—she had not even the satisfaction of braving any reproach or danger to become his, or to do or suffer anything unendurable for his sake. All was extremely unromantic, and like every-day life—nothing desperate, nothing soul-stirring, heart-breaking in it. If he at least would lose in some affair an arm or a leg, or if she was in danger—but only in danger—of losing her money, that one or the other could show some more than human attachment, it would all have been very well; but to love and marry without any trouble whatever was almost too much for any real life, and would never have made success in a book.

The last summer Carrie was to spend as Miss Cornell had passed, and she had just returned from Sharon Springs, where she had been with her brother, when she met Winnie Bliss in the street.

"Oh, Carrie, I am so glad to see you! When did you return?" said Winnie, stopping her friend, who seemed in great haste, and had not perceived her.

"We came home a few days ago. I thought of going to see you to-day," replied Carrie.

"You say that you have been already several days here, and have not been to see me yet! I cannot say that I feel particularly flattered by this, when we were always just like sisters," said Winnie, feeling really hurt.

"I would have gone sooner," said Carrie, "but every step I take is watched, and I am afraid to leave the house when brother James is there."

"But why? What has happened?"

"If there ever was an unhappy girl, Winnie, I am the one; and if you will walk with me to the next post station and home again, I will tell you all about it. I must have one heart to which I can confide my troubles."

"Then you are really unhappy?" asked Winnie, but in such a tone as one would use to ordinary mortals when they were asked if they had received an unexpected fortune.

"Unhappy! That is not the word to express it. I wonder if there is a woman whose fate is more tragical than mine?" said Carrie, a bright tear swimming in her eyes, and yet with unmistakable satisfaction in the tone.

"You know," continued she, when, having posted a letter, the two girls were cozily sitting in Carrie's small sitting-room, "that we went to Sharon Springs instead of going to Atlantic City, as we first intended to do, because there Mr. Newbold," her intended, "could go to see us every Saturday, and return on Monday to the city.

"We found no acquaintances when we first arrived, and I felt during a few days rather lonely, until a party of ladies and gentlemen came, some of whom my brother had met the year before at the same Springs. I became quickly acquainted with them, and had a gay, delightful time. My cavalier on all excursions was a Mr. Algernon Devereux, from Brooklyn, one of the most fascinating young men you ever saw. He is not as handsome as Mr. Newbold, but oh! so interesting looking, and can talk like a book. He has not at all the common, healthy, contented appearance of Thomas; no, indeed, he looks pale as death, and just as if nothing on earth could please him any more—as if he had said farewell to all earthly happiness.

"Not many days had passed before he paid me the most marked attention, and, to make a long story short, told me that he loved me, worshipped me, and that he could not live without me. Just fancy my situation. I, on the eve of being bound to another, to listen to such a declaration; and, worst of all, to feel that Thomas did not fill my heart.

"Knowing, however, how much Mr. Newbold loved and trusted me, I would perhaps have torn myself away from the fascinations of Algernon Devereux, and left Sharon Springs immediately, had not my brother, who, of course, saw his devotion to me, began in truth to persecute him. Whenever he saw us together he would click a pistol, and he who was formerly so opposed to carrying weapons, was suddenly never seen without one. That I of course became more and more interested in Algernon Devereux—don't you think the name lovely?—when I saw him in such constant danger on my account, was but a natural consequence.

"I really have no idea what I am going to do, as my brother has told me that as soon as I break with Thomas, he is going to shoot Mr. Devereux. I ask myself, over and over again, how will it all end? But I cannot answer the question. How my brother always finds out when and where Algernon and I meet, I do not know; but one thing is certain, he is always there, clicking his pistol. I had resolved the other day to tell Algernon that he must abandon every thought of me; but when I met him, and my brother stood but a few feet from us, clicking his pistol, how could I, knowing Mr. Devereux in such danger, tell him what I knew would break his heart?"

Winnie sympathized fully with her friend, and thought just as she did, that the whole affair was more dreadful and more romantic than anything she had ever read, which was surely saying much. She wondered not at all that Carrie had the click of the pistol constantly ringing in her ears.

When the young ladies had entered Carrie's sitting-room, they had not observed that her brother was in the adjoining parlor, and consequently heard every word they spoke.

"I received a valuable lesson from you, sister dear," said he to himself, when Carrie took Winnie into her room up stairs, to show her Algernon Devereux's picture. "The click of my pistol shall no longer drive you to adore the one whose life the ball endangers. I understand you now, my little woman. I made the man of too much consequence, that was the trouble; and you value so little Thomas' affection because no one clicks a pistol when he talks to you. Just wait; we shall change tactics, and shall soon know which of the two your foolish little heart really cherishes."

"Carrie," said James, the following day, "I met some of our Sharon Springs friends, and invited them to tea to-morrow."

"I am glad you did," returned Carrie. "Who is coming?"

"Mr. and Mrs. Murray, Miss Robins, her cousins, and Mr. Devereux."

"Who was it you named last?" asked Carrie, thinking that she had not heard rightly.

"Mr. Algernon Devereux," replied her brother blandly. "I think I did very wrong in disliking him because he made love to you. In some measure nobody is responsible for the feelings of his heart, and I would have perhaps to kill scores of girls did I watch Thomas as I foolishly watched you. Who could blame him if, constantly thrown together with a fascinating woman, he became interested in her? Because, you know, he might love you still, and have only a short romantic attachment to her."

"Did you hear that Thomas pays particular attention to some one?" asked Carrie, firing up at the bare idea of such a possibility.

"No, I did not; at least not that I recollect. Have a nice tea to-morrow. I shall try to make up with Mr. Devereux. I really believe him to be a nice young man; and, by George! we cannot all have the face, figure and mind of Thomas Newbold; some must be inferior animals."

"There is something concealed in brother James' words," said Carrie, when she was alone. "He who clicked his pistol every time he saw Mr. Devereux and me together, would not invite him to spend the evening with us, were it not for some purpose. He surely heard something about Thomas, as his remarks about his falling in love with another girl were otherwise entirely uncalled for. Let me see. Do I know any one to whom Thomas was unusually devoted at Sharon Springs? Yes, yes," continued she, after a short musing, "this very Miss Robins whom brother invited, he found such a nice, clever girl; and I recollect well, that one Saturday, when, not expecting him so early, I returned from a walk with Algernon, I found him talking to her on the piazza. I shall watch them closely to-morrow."

That day and the following one, Carrie's thoughts were only occupied with Thomas. The click of her brother's pistol was, of course, a satisfactory excuse to herself for listening to Mr. Devereux's declarations of undying love and devotion; but what excuse had Thomas for making love to another girl? None. It was nothing but wretched faithlessness with him, and Carrie could trust no man any more. She pitied all women whose happiness depended on them.

The next morning came, and Carrie received her guests with a fluttering heart.

Her color came and went when Thomas, not having met Miss Robins since she had returned from Sharon Springs, warmly shook hands with her, and expressed his pleasure on seeing her looking so well. In vain Mr. Devereux tried to catch Carrie's eyes. It seemed as if for her he did not exist, the first part of the evening; and when she spoke to him afterward, she found that he was very uninteresting, just a common mortal—surely because no pistol clicked in her ears.

Feeling very wretched and unhappy—not romantically, but really so—she stole out of the room after supper, to compose herself somewhat in the cool October air.

She was, however, not alone when she returned to the parlor. Thomas was with her; and when they passed James, he whispered to him that Carrie had consented to become his wife next month, on her birthday.

James gives to all brothers who have to guard pretty sisters, the advice not to click a pistol in their hearing when they give to a young man a forbidden *rendezvous*.

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THE STOLEN CURL.

BY COL. PRENTISS INGRAHAM.

Upon the shores of Lake Pontchartrain, and on the southern border of the State of Mississippi, a long row of elegant villas, a group of business houses, and here and there a public building or private institution, form the lovely and quiet town of Pass Christian, noted for its balmy climate, the beauty of its situation, its handsome residences, and the wealth and refinement of its citizens.

To the young ladies' academies and military institutions of Pass Christian, many of the wealthy planters were wont to send their daughters and sons to be educated, and as the pupils of the respective institutions would meet, in their daily promenades, many admiring glances would be exchanged between them, and longings felt to become acquainted.

Among the fair pupils of the Lake Academy none were more beautiful than Rosa Vertner, the sole heiress to all of her doting father's cotton estates, situated upon the Mississippi river.

A shower of golden curls fell upon her shoulders; blue dreamy eyes, a bright, smiling face, and a graceful form, added to a disposition of the truest womanly sweetness, made the young girl of fifteen particularly attractive to all who knew her.

Many a handsome cadet from the military academy had fallen in love with the bewitching beauty at the first glance from her heaven-lit eyes, but to none did she show a preference, when meeting at the *soirées* and receptions given by the different schools.

One of Rosa's greatest, though silent, admirers was Earl Griffith, the son of a Mississippi planter, whose estate lay adjoining that of Mr. Vertner; but between Mr. Vertner and Colonel Griffith there existed great bitterness, and for years the families had not spoken, though meeting constantly in social intercourse at the houses of the neighboring planters.

The feud commenced long years before, when Mr. Vertner and Colonel Griffith were rivals for the hand of Earl's mother.

Colonel Griffith had won her heart and hand, and married her, and his success so enraged Mr. Vertner that he challenged his successful rival; a duel followed, and in this encounter Colonel Griffith came off victorious, severely wounding his adversary.

Since that day neither had spoken to the other, and all interchange of friendly intercourse between even the negroes upon the plantations was forbidden.

Meeting at Pass Christian, thus it was, that though Rosa could not but see that Earl Griffith admired her, and he felt that she was not indifferent to his gaze, both were governed by the remembrance of the feud existing between their parents, and gave no sign of the recognition of the other's feelings.

Toward the close of a lovely summer day, in the year that this story opens, the fair pupils of the Lake Institute had gone down the long pier leading out into the lake, to the bath-house of the institution.

Soon a merry party of damsels were splashing about in the water, riding the breakers and chasing each other about in glee.

It was a pretty sight, dressed as they were in their various colored bathing suits, and a handsome youth of twenty-one, clad in the stylish uniform of the Pass Christian Military Academy, paused and gazed upon the lovely scene.

Suddenly a shriek was heard, and a dark form was borne away by the tide, out of reach of aid from her companions.

With the speed of a deer the young cadet sped down the long pier, reached the bath-house, and regardless of the cries of the frightened girls, bounded headlong into the water.

Vigorously did he breast the waves, and soon rapidly overtook the fair girl, who was nobly struggling to sustain herself above the waters, for she was a fair swimmer.

Soon he came nearer, and seeing that help was at hand, her courage forsook her, and she sank beneath the waters, while shrieks of distress from the shore showed that her companions believed her forever lost.

With a deep dive, the youth succeeded in catching hold of the drowning girl, and with renewed strength started shoreward.

Bravely did he struggle, and at last he felt that he would reach the shore, for when almost to the bath-house two of the Professors of the Institute, alarmed by the cries of distress, had run down to the scene, and swimming out a few yards, had relieved the tired youth of his precious burden.

Without a word, the young man turned once more seaward, and to the surprise of all, commenced to swim down the coast.

In vain did they call to him from the shore; on he swam, and night coming rapidly on, he was no longer visible.

After continuing slowly and with strong and steady stroke down the coast, the cadet swam toward a pier that projected some distance into the lake, and then drew himself, greatly fatigued, from the water.

Looking around him, to see that he was not watched, he walked rapidly up the pier, and struck off across the fields for the Academy.

Arriving there, he sought his room, and reached it unperceived, where he hastily changed his clothing.

Before descending to the study hall to join his fellow-students, he drew from the pocket of his saturated jacket he had thrown aside, a long golden curl, dampened by the sea-water.

"I could not resist the temptation to sever this beautiful curl from its golden mates; she will miss it, and yet she will never know who it was that saved her life."

And carefully drying the tress of hair, the cadet placed it securely away.

A great excitement was created at Pass Christian by the saving from a watery grave of the beautiful Rosa Vertner, and of the strange conduct of her noble preserver, whoever he might be, for it was impossible to discover his name, and all that could be ascertained was, that he was a cadet from the Military Academy.

This much the young girls had noticed, as he sprang from the pier, and Rosa, having become unconscious, could not describe his features.

The missing curl was commented upon, and the faces of all the cadets were eagerly scanned by the pupils of the Lake Institute, and the citizens, who evinced a deep interest in the mysterious affair, but yet an expression of innocence rested upon every student's face, and gave no clue.

Mr. Vertner came to the Pass, and in vain did he visit the academy and endeavor to find out the brave youth who had rescued his daughter from death; it was useless, and after a time it was thought over only as a thing of the past.

Three years have passed since the incidents mentioned above, and from the shores of the sunny Gulf, the scene changes to the banks of the Mississippi river.

Riding slowly along the levee road, are two persons, a lady and gentleman upon horseback.

Earnestly they are conversing together, and then the maiden draws rein, and rests her gloved hand upon her companion's arm.

"Earl, here you must leave me, and forever. It is hard to give you up, but my father will never forgive and forget the past, not even for my sake, as dearly as he loves me.

"I cannot again meet you. This morning he discovered our secret meetings, and forbade me ever again to see you; and upon your return home, you will find a bitter letter from him, demanding my letters.

"You know how dearly I love you, and yet you know we must part. Good-bye, Earl, and that God protect you will ever be my prayer."

And bright diamond tears rolled down the beautiful face of Rosa Vertner, and fell upon the roadside.

"I will not urge you to disobey your father, Rosa. I have ever loved you since, as a little girl, I used to see you dashing about upon your pony. When at the Pass at school, I loved you more dearly; and how I blessed kind fate that threw us together, untrammelled by the presence of our parents, when you came up the river a year ago upon the steamer.

"Then I felt that you controlled my life's happiness, and dearly have I enjoyed our stolen interviews.

"Now all is over, and we must part. I will do as your father asks me in his letter—return all you have sent me. Rosa, my own darling, good-bye!"

Thus the lovers parted, and while Rosa returned to her father's plantation, a mile down the river, Earl Griffith leaped his horse into a cotton-field that bordered the river bank, and darted away in the direction of his own home, for death had lain his father in the grave, and he was master and owner of the large estate.

Arriving at his door, a negro messenger from the Vertner plantation awaited his arrival, and presented him with a letter.

Entering his sanctum, he broke the seal, and his brow darkened as he read the contents.

"For her sake I will forbear, and for her sake I will return her letters—every little memento of her love; yes, *all*."

A few moments after, the ebony messenger rode away, bearing in his hands a small package addressed to "Mr. Branch Vertner, Sunny Side Plantation."

Branch Vertner was pacing the broad veranda that encircled his handsome residence.

A stern, haughty man—his brow was darkly clouded, and his eyes wore an angry expression, as ever and anon he glanced down the avenue, as if in expectancy.

"Ha! at last! I hope he has not dared to refuse my demand; if so—" And he grasped the package held out to him by the negro boy.

Breaking the seal, he glanced over the contents. The frown darkened, when his face suddenly paled. The letters and love trinkets fell to the floor, as he exclaimed:

"What does this mean?"

In his hand he held a long silken curl, flashing like golden strands in the light of the setting sun.

Upon a card attached, he read:

"Rescued from the waves. Pass Christian, June 15th, 18—."

One moment he glanced at the card, his face changing with the emotions that swept over him, and then he called out to the retreating messenger:

"Robert, come here!"

The negro again advanced.

"Mount your horse, and return at once, and quickly, to the Griffith Manor. Present my best wishes to Mr. Earl Griffith, and say that I request the pleasure of seeing him immediately at Sunny Side plantation!"

"Yes, sir."

And while the messenger started away at full speed, Mr. Vertner continued his walk up and down the veranda.

An hour had not passed when Earl Griffith rode up to the door, dismounted, and ascended the broad steps, wearing upon his face a puzzled expression at his strange and unexpected summons to Sunny Side.

Advancing toward him, Branch Vertner extended his hand, while he said, in a firm voice:

"Earl Griffith, I never believed that you, or one of your race, would ever be invited across my threshold. Your package sent me this evening told me whom it was that saved my daughter's life three years ago; hence I bury the hatchet, and offer my hand. You are a noble man, and I believe will accept it."

Thus the feud was settled, all animosities buried and the two families united by the strongest ties, for Earl and Rosa were married soon after and all this happiness came about through the romance of *the stolen curl*.

◆

Never Knew What Killed Him.

An old farmer went out one day looking over his broad acres, with an ax on his shoulder and a small dog at his heels. They espied a woodchuck. The dog gave chase, and drove him into a stone-wall, where action immediately commenced. The dog would draw the woodchuck partly out from the wall, and the woodchuck would take the dog back. The old farmer's sympathy getting high on the side of the dog, he thought he must help him. Putting himself in position, with the ax raised, he waited for the attraction of the woodchuck, when he would cut him down. So an opportunity offered, and the old man struck, but the woodchuck gathered up at the same time, took the dog in far enough to receive the blow, and the dog was killed on the spot. Forty years after, the old man, in relating the story, would always add, "And that dog don't know to this day but what the woodchuck killed him."

THE OLD BEAU.

BY GRACE H. HORR.

Well, I'll tell you the reason I am an old beau,
'Tis because that I like young society so;
And how could I now with the young people go,
If I had not become such a charming old beau?

For I never was much of a scholar, you see—
Was not learned or wise; never took a degree.
'Tis all very well for some persons, we know;
But for me, I preferred just the life of a beau.

I may say all I had was my beauty and grace:
While I flatter myself you the former can trace,
The cognomen given the latter will show,
For acquaintance all dubbed me Apollo le Beau!

I forget; my friends said that I had something more—
'Twas a heart!—Well, I always was kindly, I'm sure.
There's one thing, however, the women all know,
That the worst kind of men cannot make a good beau.

Ah, how could I resign all those glorious days,
And jog-trot along o'er the common highways
With every old codger who happened—Oh, no!
So I changed from a young to a gallant old beau.

Something else helped to make the old beau I could name,
But I'm sure that the story to you would be tame.
Some trouble I've had, boys—but, pshaw! let it go;
No trouble must darken the eyes of a beau!

Poor Thackeray said, with a sigh of despair,
He remembered the time when his thick tangled hair
His nurse could scarce comb. I remember it too,
But the time is long past—I'm a happy old beau.

It is true I've recourse to a little "fine art,"
Just to cover defects, and to play well my part:
No, boys, do not laugh—it seems not long ago
When the girls all exclaimed, "What an exquisite beau!"

If I did not use art, what a fright I should be!
Without teeth, without legs, or a hair you could see;
No shoulders, no sides—how I'd feel, mean and slow!
So I just must remain, as before, an old beau!

A DARING GAME;

OR,

Neva's Three Lovers.

By MRS. HARRIET LEWIS,

AUTHOR OF "THE HAMPTON MYSTERY," "THE BAILIFF'S SCHEME," "THE LADY OF KILDARE," "THE OLD LIFE'S SHADOWS," ETC., ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XLI.

THE DESPAIR OF RUFUS AND LALLY.

At the grim and warlike announcement of Mrs. Peters' identity, delivered in Mrs. Peters' grimmest and most warlike manner, Rufus Black recoiled involuntarily, his face expressing his utter amazement.

He had felt confident that this angular and sour-visaged woman was Miss Wroat, and that his deserted young wife was in the woman's employ, under the assumed name of Mrs. Peters. In his astonishment and disappointment, he stood pale and speechless.

"You may go down, Mary," said Mrs. Peters to the house-maid. "The gentleman came to see me, you hear."

The house-maid, being in awe of Mrs. Peters, precipitately retired to the servants' hall.

"And now, sir," said Mrs. Peters, in such a voice as she might have employed in uttering a challenge, "what may you want with me?"

Rufus Black struggled to regain his self-control.

"There is some mistake," he gasped. "I—I remember you. I saw you in the Regent street picture-shop the other day, with—with a young lady. I thought she called herself Mrs. Peters. I am come to see her."

"Come in," said Mrs. Peters, who was in inward terror of Lally's appearance upon the scene, and who had made up her mind to prevent an interview between the young pair at all costs. "Come in, sir, and I'll hear what you have to say."

She conducted him to the library, which was across the hall from the drawing-rooms. It was lighted by a pendant chandelier, in which were a dozen wax-candles which burned with mellow light. A great circular bay-window took up one side of the apartment, the opposite side containing a great fireplace, in which logs were burning. The angles on either side the chimney were fitted with tall book-cases, and one end of the room was also lined with rows of shelves well filled with books, and protected by plate-glass doors. At the opposite end of the room was a glazed garden door, opening upon the grassy terrace.

This room already bid fair to become a favorite resort of Lally. She had ordered it to be warmed and lighted at the same time with the drawing-room, and was likely to visit it during the evening. Mrs. Peters locked the door, therefore, as she motioned Rufus to a seat. He declined the civility, however, and remained standing, his hat in his hand.

"I remember you very well now," said Mrs. Peters, pretending to search her memory, "now that you have mentioned the picture-shop. You are the young gentleman who annoyed the young lady with me? Yes, I remember you. What are you doing here? Why have you followed us to Scotland? Why have you come to Heather Hills?"

"I am come, madam," cried Rufus, white and agitated, "to see the young lady who was in your company at Benson's the other day. It is imperative that I should see her."

"I think not," said Mrs. Peters gravely. "In the first place, how can you be sure that the young lady is in this house?"

"I have traced her and you all the way from London," cried Rufus. "I saw the card you gave to Benson, with the name upon it of 'Miss Wroat, Mount street,' with the number. I went to Mount street twice, and the second time discovered that you had left town. I hurried to the station of the Great Northern, and found that the express had gone. And then—"

"And then?"

"I went to my hotel. I had not money enough for such a trip as this," said Rufus frankly, "and so I could not come on the morning train. I had to sell my watch, a recent present from my father, and as I had then all day on my hands before I could start for the north, I went to Mount street again. In one of the streets near, I inquired at a shop about Miss Wroat, and there learned that she was an eccentric old lady—excuse me, madam, but I received a very accurate description of *you*. And so I knew that you were Miss Wroat, and that Lally is Mrs. Peters. I took the night train for Edinburgh, twenty-four hours later than yourself. I reached Inverness this afternoon, and discovered the names of Miss Wroat and Mrs. Peters registered at the Caledonian. A servant of the house told me that you were at Heather Hills, and a cabman brought me here. I know that Lally is in this house, madam, and I must see her!"

Mrs. Peters smiled grimly as a full comprehension of Rufus Black's mistake dawned upon her. She understood readily that the shopman whom Rufus had interrogated had not known of Mrs. Wroat's death, and had confounded the names of Mrs. Wroat and Miss Wroat, and that Rufus very naturally thought her the "eccentric old lady" of whom he had heard.

"And so you don't believe that I am Mrs. Peters?" she asked.

"No, madam," said Rufus bluntly. "I have traced an elderly lady—yourself—and a young girl—Lally—all the way from London, and under the names of Miss Wroat and Mrs. Peters. You are not Mrs. Peters, and I demand to see her."

"You cannot see her," said Mrs. Peters stoutly. "I have heard the young lady's story, and I shall protect her from the persecutions of a man who deserted her in the most cowardly fashion, and who, believing her to be dead, never made one movement to save her supposed remains from interment in a pauper's grave. You have no claim upon Miss Bird, Mr. Rufus Black; you have yourself declared that she is not your wife."

"Lally has told you all?" cried Rufus, in a low, heart-broken voice. "Not all though, for even she does not know all—the sleepless nights I've passed, the days of anguish! I've hated myself, and despised myself. I have been on the point again and again of committing suicide. Her poor young face, as I fancied it, mutilated and dead, has haunted me sleeping and waking. God alone knows my anguish, my remorse! If Lally only knew all!"

"She knows more than you think," said Mrs Peters significantly.

"How? What? I do not understand."

"Miss Bird has a shelter under this roof now, and while I live she shall never want a friend," said Mrs. Peters, purposely confirming Rufus Black's impression that Lally was a dependent, "but she has known such extremes of poverty as would make you shudder. She left her lodgings in New Brompton, turned out by an insolent landlady, having only the clothes she stood in. She went out upon Waterloo Bridge in her despair, to commit suicide. An unfortunate girl did commit suicide, springing from Lally's very side, and Lally's handkerchief fluttering after the poor lost creature fixed upon her Lally's identity. Lally fled from the terrible scene, and that night she slept upon Hampstead Heath, under the open sky, with tramps and thieves all around her in the darkness, and she knowing it not—homeless, houseless, penniless—"

"O Heaven!" cried Rufus Black, in an uncontrollable agitation.

"You think it terrible for a girl so young and beautiful? Listen. Worse was to come. She went to a poor old seamstress she had known when teaching music in a school. This seamstress gave her shelter and protection, but she was dying of consumption, and Lally had soon to work for her and nurse her, and after a little to bury her. When the poor woman died, Lally was once more homeless, and without work. She was nearly starved, and her one great desire was to look upon your face again, herself unseen. And so she wandered down into Kent—"

"Into Kent? Oh, my poor girl!"

"She was ragged and tattered, hungry and forlorn. She worked in the hop-gardens for food and shelter. She saw you—"

Rufus uttered a cry of incredulity.

"She did not see me!" he ejaculated. "I should have known her in any guise. I should have felt her nearness, had she been on the opposite side of the street."

Mrs. Peters' lip curled.

"You think so?" she said dryly. "Let me tell you that your wronged and deserted young wife was nearer to you than that, and yet you did not know it. Do you remember a certain September evening when you sat beside the heiress of Hawkhurst upon a way-side bank, in the shadow of Hawkhurst park? Do you remember your passionate vows of love to Miss Wynde? Do you remember telling Miss Wynde that your very life here and beyond depended upon her answer to your suit? Well, there was one listening to those passionate vows whom you thought dead. In the thicket, almost within an arm's length of you, a poor, worn-out, ragged tramp was lying for a brief rest—a hungry, houseless, tattered tramp, Mr. Black—and that tramp was your disowned young wife!"

"O my God! Impossible!"

"You passed on with your beautiful new love in all her pride and her beauty, and the old love rose up from her thorny bed and crept after you like a shadow, and when you stood in the light upon the Hawkhurst terrace, with the hand of your new love pressed to your lips, the old love stood outside the great gates a long way off, and with her face against the bars looked in upon you both, as a lost soul might look in upon Paradise."

"Oh, Lally, Lally!" cried Rufus, in a wild anguish, utterly losing his self-control. "Lally! Was she there? My poor, poor darling!"

"When you turned to come back down the avenue, she fled moaning. She had seen you, and it seemed as if she must die. But she was young and strong, and life clung to her, although her heart was breaking. She wandered on for hours, and finally lay down under a wayside hedge. The next day she worked in hop-gardens, and the next night she slept in a barn with the hop-pickers, many of whom are tramps and thieves out of London for a holiday. She earned a little money, and went to Canterbury and advertised for a situation, which she obtained—"

"As your companion, Madam? May God in heaven bless you for your goodness to my poor forsaken girl! And she lived and suffered while I mourned her as dead. Oh, Madam, I can explain all that seems so strange to you and her. I never loved Miss Wynde as I loved Lally. I believed Lally dead, and that I was her murderer. I was consumed with remorse and anguish. I was desperate, and going to the bad, and I prayed Miss Wynde to save me. But I loved only Lally. I pray you to let me see her. She will believe me—"

"That is the very reason I shall not permit you to see her. She is getting to take an interest in life, and I will not have her growing peace disturbed. You are engaged to this heiress—"

"O no, I am not. And if I were I would not marry her, now that I know that Lally lives. My father threatened me with arrest and imprisonment if I did not give Lally up. He assured me that the marriage was null and void, and that he would provide for my poor girl. I'm a coward, Miss Wroat, a poor, pitiful coward, and I have had all my life long a deadly fear of my father. You cannot understand that fear; perhaps no one can; but I shall fling off that awe and terror of him, and be henceforth my own master. I was one-and-twenty yesterday, Madam, and I am now accountable alone to God and to the laws of my country. I love Lally, and Lally alone, in all the world. I am going to try to be worthy of her. She is poor, and I am poor; but if she will take me back again," said Rufus humbly, "we will begin life anew, and I will try to be a better man. I will work for her, and I'll try to be a great painter, so that she may be proud of me. And if I can't be that, I'll be anything that is honest and manly to earn our support. I know you have a poor opinion of me, Madam, and I know I deserve it. I don't amount to much from any point of view, but if you would intercede for me with Lally, and beg her to try me again and marry me, I will bless you always as my benefactress and savior."

The young man's humility and anguished pleading touched the heart of Mrs. Peters, but she steeled herself against him, and said:

"Mr. Black, I am sorry for you. I believe that you mean what you say now, but if you were once to get under your father's influence again, Miss Lally would be as unhappy as ever. I advise you to go back to Miss Wynde, and leave Lally here. In time she may marry an honorable and upright gentleman, with whom she will be far happier than she could be with you."

A quick flush of jealousy overspread the youth's face. His eyes glared at Mrs. Peters with a hunted expression.

"She won't marry again until I die, or the law has freed her from me," he exclaimed. "I would never have proposed marriage to Miss Wynde, had I not supposed Lally to be dead. She is my wife, Madam, and I'll declare her to be such until she herself forbids me to do so. If she marries any other man, I'll kill him!"

The young man's jealous fury was succeeded by an instant and terrible despair.

"Forgive me," he said humbly. "What am I, to talk of controlling Lally's movements? I have forfeited all claim upon her, and upon her forgiveness. If she refuses to take me back, I can only go to perdition. If she will stretch out her hand to save me, I will be her slave. Will you not take a brief message to her from me, madam—only a few words?"

Mrs. Peters fancied she heard a light step in the hall. She listened, but convinced of her mistake, said nervously and hastily:

"I cannot convey your message, sir. I entreat you to leave Miss Bird in peace. I repeat that you cannot see her under this roof."

"How summarily you dispose of the happiness and the very destiny of a fellow-being!" said Rufus despairingly and reproachfully. "I would see her in your presence—"

"You cannot. You have prolonged this interview beyond bounds, sir. Take my advice and go back to Miss Wynde. I must bid you a good-evening, Mr. Black. You can go out at this garden door, if you please."

Mrs. Peters threw open the garden door, and a gust of chill wind swept in, nearly extinguishing the lights. Rufus hesitated, but the door remained open, and Mrs. Peters looked so grim and stern that he obeyed her without a murmur, and went out in a dead silence, his wild eyes giving her a last look of reproach and despair.

A minute later, she heard his cab roll away from the house.

"I wonder if I have done right," the woman muttered uneasily, as she closed the door. "I have taken a great responsibility upon myself in deciding the fate of my young mistress. I almost wish that I had let him see her, but she is so young and tender and pitiful, she would be sure to take him back again. His eyes will haunt me. He looked as a man might look on his way to execution."

At that moment the library door was tried from the hall, and an imperious little knock sounded upon the panels.

"Peters," cried Lally, from without, in an agitated voice, "let me in! let me in!"

Peters calmed her face, and hastened to unlock the door.

Lally swept in impetuously, her gipsy face aglow, her black eyes full of fire, her chest panting. She held in one hand a gentleman's glove, which she had just picked up from the hall floor.

Her keen eyes swept the room, and her countenance fell with disappointment at finding Mrs. Peters alone.

"I heard a carriage go away just now, Peters," she cried. "Who has been here?"

"Was it not the wind, Miss?" cried Peters, flushing.

"No; I heard wheels going down the drive. And here is something I found in the hall, Peters—a man's glove. Whose is it?"

"It might be Toppen's, Miss—"

"It might be, but it isn't," said Lally, full of suppressed excitement, that made her strangely beautiful. "This is a gentleman's glove. See how soft and fine the kid is. The color is just the shade of lavender Rufus used to wear when he wore gloves, and it has just the jessamine scent he used to drop always into his gloves. And—and here is one of the very glove buttons he used to slip from one pair of gloves to another. I would know that small gold knob, with its chased edge, anywhere. Peters, he has been here! Rufus has been here!"

The flushing, agitated face of Mrs. Peters confessed the truth.

"He has followed us up from London!" cried Lally, her eyes glowing like suns. "He has come after me and traced me to this place. He loves me still—he must love me, Peters! He must love me better than Miss Wynde!"

"He said so, Miss Lally."

"Ah, then it is true? But why did he go away without seeing me? Why did you not call me? Perhaps he will give up all for me, thinking me still poor like himself?"

"He said he would, Miss Lally," said poor, honest Mrs. Peters, driven to full confession. "He thinks that I am Miss Wroat, and that you are Mrs. Peters, my poor companion. And he says he loves you, and wants to marry you; but he is so unstable and cowardly, and I knew you ought to make a grand marriage, with your face and your fortune; and so—and so, Miss Lally, I sent him off, and he's gone back to England and to Miss Wynde."

Poor Lally stared at her maid with dilating eyes and horror-stricken countenance. Then she said, in a wailing voice:

"Oh, Peters, you meant well, I know; but—but you've broken my heart!"

And with a low, wild moan, Lally fell forward in a dead swoon.

CHAPTER XLII.

SIR HAROLD'S RETURN.

That night upon which Rufus Black visited Heather Hills, and was sent away again in despair, was a wild night throughout Great Britain and upon its coasts. Ships were wrecked upon the Goodwin Sands, and upon the south and west coasts. Over the open moors and heaths of the country the winds went roaring like unloosed demons, bent upon terrible mischief. Women with husbands at sea cowered before their blazing fires that night, and children in their beds snuggled closer and held their breaths with very fear. Houses were unroofed in many places, chimneys were blown down, and lives were lost upon bridges and country roads through falling timbers and uprooted trees. The gale that night was one long to be remembered for its wild violence, one so severe not having been experienced in Great Britain for years.

Mr. Atkins, the Canterbury solicitor, sat in his office until a late hour that night. His house was in a pleasant, quiet street, in a good neighborhood, and the lower floor was occupied by him as his office, the drawing-room being upon the second floor, and the family rooms above. The main office had an independent entrance from the street, with a door opening directly into the office—a convenient arrangement duly appreciated by Mrs. Atkins, as it left the house entrance free to her family and guests.

The solicitor had changed somewhat since his first introduction to the reader. His honest face had grown thin and sallow, his hair was streaked with gray, and there were anxious lines about his mouth and eyes that told of unrest and trouble.

He sat in a lounging chair before the fire, his feet on the fender. His family had long since retired, and the hour was wearing on toward eleven o'clock. His fire flamed up in a wild glow, the gas burned brightly, the red fire gleams lighted the dull office carpet and the well-polished furniture, making the room seem especially cozy and delightful. The shutters were lowered, but no care could shut out the sound of the mad winds careering through the streets, clutching at resisting outer blinds, and bearing along now and then some clattering sign-board or other estray.

"An awful night," sighed the solicitor. "I have a strange feeling as if something were going to happen!"

He shifted uneasily in his chair, and bent forward and laid fresh coals upon the fire. Then he leaned back again and thought.

The office clock struck eleven, and the loud clangor struck upon Mr. Atkins in his nervous mood with singular unpleasantness. Before the echo of the last stroke had died out, footsteps were heard in the street, unsteady and wavering, as if the pedestrian were battling with the storm, and found it difficult to advance against it.

"Some poor fellow," thought Mr. Atkins. "He must be homeless, to be out at this hour and in such a gale."

The steps came nearer still and nearer, their sound being now and then lost in the tumult of the winds. They paused at the foot of the solicitor's office steps, and then slowly mounted to the door.

"Who can it be at this time of night?" muttered Mr. Atkins. "Some vagabond who means to sleep on my steps? Or is it some houseless wanderer who sees my light through the shutters, and is come to beg of me?"

It almost seemed as if it were the latter, for the office lights did gleam out into the black streets, and lighted up a patch of pavement.

A knock, low and unsteady, was rung upon the knocker.

Mr. Atkins hesitated. He was not a timid man, but he had no client who found it necessary to visit him at that hour, and his visitor, he thought, was as likely to be some desperate vagrant or professional thief as an honest man.

The knock, low and faint and imploring, sounded again. It seemed to the solicitor as if there was something especially guarded and secret in the manner of it.

He arose and took from his office desk a loaded pistol, and placed it in his breast pocket. Then he went to the door and undid the bars and bolts, throwing it half way open, and peering out.

A man stood upon the steps, muffled in a thick long overcoat, whose fur collar was turned up above his ears. A slouched hat was drawn over his face, and Mr. Atkins could not distinguish a feature of his face.

"Who is it?" asked the solicitor, his hand feeling for his pistol.

"An old friend," was the reply, in a hoarse whisper. "I must see you. Let me in, Atkins."

He stepped forward, with an air of command that impressed Atkins, who involuntarily stepped aside, giving the stranger admittance.

The new-comer quietly turned the key in the lock.

Atkins clutched his pistol, quietly upon his guard.

"Who are you?" he demanded. "What do you want?"

The stranger took off his hat, revealing the upper portion of a noble head, crowned with grizzled hair. Then slowly he turned down his greatcoat collar, and stood before Atkins without disguise, displaying a grandly noble face, with keen blue eyes, a pale, bronzed countenance, and sternly set lips above a gray military beard.

Atkins' hand dropped to his side. With a wild and stifled shriek, he staggered to a chair, his eyes glaring wildly at the stranger.

"My God!" he cried, with white lips. "Sir Harold Wynde!"

Sir Harold—for it was indeed he, returned that day to England, after a prolonged journey from India—smiled his old warm smile, and held out his hand.

"Sir Harold Wynde!" repeated Atkins, not taking the hand—"who—who died—"

"I can give you the best of proofs, Atkins, that I did not die in India," said the Baronet, with a cheery little laugh. "You look at me as at a ghost, but I'm no ghost. Feel my hand. Is not that real flesh and blood? Atkins, you are giving me but a sorry welcome, my old friend."

Atkins still stared with a wild incredulity at his old friend and employer. He could not yet comprehend the glad truth.

"I—I must be dreaming," he muttered. "I felt queer to-night. I—"

Sir Harold advanced and, pulling off his glove, laid his hand on that of Atkins. Its touch was chill, but unmistakably human.

"What!" cried the Baronet. "Do you believe in ghosts, my friend? I wouldn't have believed a bona-fide wraith could have so startled the hard-headed Atkins I once knew. I was not eaten by the tiger, Atkins, but I have been kept a prisoner in the hands of human tigers until I managed to escape last month. You know me now, and that I am no ghost?"

Atkins rose up, pale and trembling still, but with an unutterable joy on his face.

"It is Sir Harold, alive, and in the flesh!" he ejaculated. "Sir Harold whom we mourned as dead! This is a miracle!"

He clasped the Baronet's hand, and laughed and cried in a breath. He seemed overflowing with his great joy.

The Baronet held the trembling hand of his friend in a strong, restful pressure for some minutes, during which not a word was spoken between them. Their hearts were full.

"I am not myself to-night, Sir Harold," said Atkins brokenly, after a little. "I have been upset lately."

He drew Sir Harold toward the fire, helped him off with his greatcoat, and ensconced him in the lounging chair before the fender. Then he drew a chair close beside the Baronet's, and asked tremulously:

"Have you been to Hawkhurst yet, Sir Harold?"

"No, not yet. You could not think I would leave home again so soon, if I had gone there? I only landed in England to-day, coming through France. I am a week overdue. I arrived in Canterbury an hour ago, and as soon as I had food I came to you. I saw your light through the shutters, but if I had not seen it I should have rapped you up, in my impatience. I want you to go with me to Hawkhurst, and to break the news that I still live to my wife and daughter. My appearance shocked you nearly into an apoplexy. I must not appear unannounced to them."

Mr. Atkins trembled, and covered his face with his hand.

"You would go to-night—in this storm?" he asked.

"Yes, yes. What is the storm to me? A few miles only divide me from my home and loved ones. And I shall see them before I sleep. Oh, Atkins, how I have looked forward to this hour of my home coming! I have thought of it during the days and nights when I lay chained in an Indian hut among the Himalayas; I have thought of it when pacing the lonely deck at midnight under the stars. I have prayed for this hour as the crowning joy of my life. Almost home! It seems as if my soul would burst with rapture. My home! My wife! My child! The sweetest, holiest words in our language!"

The Baronet's face glowed with a joyous radiance. Atkins was sick at heart.

"I have been careful that no hint of my return as from the dead should arrive before me," continued Sir Harold. "I came home under the name of Harold Hunlow. Only Major Archer and his family, besides yourself, know that I still live. At the hotel I registered the name of Hunlow, and no one but a new waiter I had never seen before saw my face. The surprise of my family will be complete. Come, Atkins, let us be off. I have a cab waiting at the hotel."

"I—I wouldn't go to-night, Sir Harold," said Atkins feebly.

Something in his tones alarmed the Baronet.

"Why not?" he demanded. "I—I have taken it for granted that they are all well at home. Octavia — Neva — how are they? Speak!"

Atkins arose, twisting his hands nervously together. His pallor frightened Sir Harold, who arose also.

"What is it?" he whispered. "They—they are not dead?"

"No, Sir Harold—no!"

"Thank God! You frightened me, Atkins. I can bear anything, now that I know they are alive. What has happened? They have not met with an accident? Don't tell me, Atkins, that my wife, my beautiful young wife, is insane through grief at my supposed death?"

Atkins groaned aloud.

"No, no," he said, grating his teeth and clenching his hands. "It is not that."

"What is it then? Speak, for God's sake. The suspense is killing me!"

"I have bad news for you, Sir Harold," said the solicitor tremblingly. "Let me give you a glass of wine—"

Sir Harold clutched the solicitor's arm, his burning eyes fixed upon the solicitor's face.

"Speak!" he said hoarsely.

"I will, if you will sit down."

Sir Harold dropped silently into his chair.

"Lady Wynde," said Atkins—"Lady Wynde—how can I speak the words to you who love her so, Sir Harold?—She has married again!"

Every vestige of color died from the Baronet's face, and he lay back upon his chair fainting. Atkins ran for water and brandy. He bathed Sir Harold's face and chafed his hands, and poured brandy down his throat, the tears on his own cheeks. Presently Sir Harold gasped for breath, and looked up at him with a dazed and stunned expression.

"Say that over again, Atkins," he said feebly. "I don't quite understand."

"I said, Sir Harold," said the solicitor, every word giving him a pang, "that Lady Wynde had married again."

Sir Harold gave a strange cry, and covered his face with his hands.

"Don't take it so, Sir Harold," cried Atkins. "You've had a happy escape from her. She's a heartless, unprincipled—"

Sir Harold put up his hand.

"Don't!" he said pleadingly. "You hurt me, Atkins. She thought me dead, my poor Octavia. Who—who did she marry?"

"A gamester and adventurer named Craven Black. During the past month, Sir Harold, I have devoted much time to the study of Mrs. Craven Black's antecedents. Forgive me, Sir Harold, but in this hour you must know all the truth. I am like the physician who cuts deeply to extract a ball. Sir Harold, the woman you married was never fit to be taken into your family; she was never fit to be placed as step-mother and guardian over a pure young girl—"

"Atkins, she is my wife. Mine still, although another claims her. I will not hear a word against her."

"You must hear it, Sir Harold," said Atkins resolutely. "If you do not hear it from me, others less kind will pour it into your ears. You cannot escape the knowledge. As I said, during the past month I have studied up Lady Wynde's antecedents. I have seen Mrs. Hyde, Lady Wynde's aunt, and I have also seen a former maid of her ladyship. I tell you, Sir Harold, and I pray you to forgive me for telling you the truth, the woman you married never loved you. She married you only as a part of a daring conspiracy—"

"Atkins!"

"It is true, so help me God!" cried Atkins solemnly. "Lady Wynde—I suppose she is Lady Wynde still, her last marriage being rendered invalid by your return to the living, as one might say—Lady Wynde was engaged to marry Craven Black before she ever saw you. Mrs. Hyde told me this herself."

"I cannot believe it!"

"Craven Black was poor, and so was Octavia Hathaway. You were at Brighton, rich, a widower. Craven Black conceived the idea that Octavia should win and wed you, and secure a rich jointure, upon which, in due time, having rid themselves of you, they should marry—"

"This is monstrous! Atkins, you are deceived. You are belying a noble woman!"

"Hear the rest, Sir Harold. As God is my judge, I believe your wife married you intending to poison you!"

Sir Harold shook his head. The idea seemed too monstrous for belief.

"That affair in the water at Brighton was planned beforehand," persisted Atkins. "You rescued the lady, as was expected of you. She followed up the acquaintance, and married you. You went to India; and I believe, if you had not gone, you would have died here suddenly of poison. When Lady Wynde had worn mourning a year in most decorous fashion, Craven Black and his son came up to Wyndham, and early in September there were great festivities at Hawkhurst, at the third marriage of Lady Wynde. There was a ball at the great house, and a ball for the tenantry on the lawn, with music and fire-works. It was for all the world an affair such as might have greeted the coming of age of an heir to a grand property, rather than the marriage of a widow from the house of her late husband to a notorious adventurer."

Sir Harold groaned heavily.

"And they are at Hawkhurst now?" he said, in a voice so altered that Atkins hardly recognized it.

"No; they have been away for a month."

"You understand that all these charges are not proved against Lady Wynde?" said Sir Harold. "I shall take my wife back again, Atkins, if she will come, and I will stand between her and the censure of a gossipping world."

"Did you write from India the night before you disappeared, enjoining your daughter by her love for you to marry the son of Craven Black?" demanded Atkins abruptly.

"No; how should I? I don't know Craven Black, nor his son."

Atkins went to his desk, and took out a letter.

"Read that, Sir Harold," he said, returning and presenting it to the Baronet. "Lady Wynde gave that letter to Miss Wynde, telling her it was your last letter to your daughter, written upon the eve of your supposed death."

Sir Harold read the letter to the very end, an awful sternness gathering on his countenance. The tender epithets by which he had called his daughter, his particular modes of speech, and his own phraseology, in that skillfully forged letter, staggered him.

"I never wrote it," he said briefly. "It is a forgery!"

"Of course. I knew that. But Lady Wynde gave it to Miss Neva, declaring it to be your last letter."

"Who is this Rufus Black?"

"A weak-souled, kindly young fellow, the son of a villain, and a ready instrument in the hands of his father. He loves Miss Neva, and proposed to her. She, however, loves Lord Towyn—"

"Lord Towyn! My old college-mate?"

"No; his son. Arthur has come into the title and property, and is as noble a young man as any in England. Miss Neva favored him, and the result is, Lady Wynde and Craven Black conceived a hatred of your daughter, and determined to bend her to their will. Sir Harold, as God hears me, Lady Wynde is a wicked, unscrupulous woman."

Sir Harold's face was deathly white. The letter, still held in his trembling hands, was proof of his wife's wickedness, and he began to be convinced that he had been cruelly deceived by an unprincipled woman.

"It would have been better if I had died in India!" he moaned.

"Not so. Sir Harold, there is more to hear. Can you bear another blow?"

Sir Harold bowed; he was too broken to speak.

"A month ago, Lady Wynde, with her new husband and Miss Wynde, went away, ostensibly to Wynde Heights. But they did not go there. A letter came from Brussels to Lord Towyn, purporting to be from Miss Wynde, but Lord Towyn went to Brussels, and discovered that the young lady and her enemies have not been there. We have had detectives at work for weeks; Lord Towyn is at work day and night, scarcely knowing rest, and I have done all that I could, but the fact remains. Craven Black and his wife have abducted Miss Wynde, and God alone, besides her enemies, knows where she is."

The Baronet leaped to his feet.

"Neva missing!" he cried.

"Yes, Sir Harold, missing for a month past, and she is in the hands of enemies who would not scruple to take her life, if they could hope to make money by her death. We have searched Great Britain for her, and have detectives at this moment upon the Continent. She is gone—lost! Her enemies have determined to force her into a marriage with Rufus Black, and to seize upon her property. She is helpless in their hands. You have returned in time to help search for her, but I am hopeless. We shall never find her except she is dead, or married to the son of that villain!"

Sir Harold was about to speak, but his voice choked. He leaned against his chair, looking like one dying.

And at that juncture, while the wind tore yet more madly through the streets, footsteps were heard ascending to the street door of the office, and, for the second time that night, the office knocker sounded lowly, secretly, and cautiously, yet with an imperiousness that commanded an instant admittance.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

—We should amuse our evening hours of life in cultivating the tender plants, and bringing them to perfection, before they are transplanted to a happier clime.

WORN AND TORN.

BY ETHEL LYNN.

Two words we count but commonplace,
The while they mean so much:
"Worn," aimless as an ended chase;
"Torn" with the lightning's lurid trace,
And hot unwelcome touch.

"Worn," with its grave along Life's street,
Never a blossom left
To broider it, or make it sweet;
Earth's brown warp worn by idle feet,
Bare of its grassy weft.

"Torn" where new sundered daisies lay
O'er cleft in sodded green;
Yet on the verge they nod as gay
As though a dying yesterday
Laid not below unseen.

"Worn" hath a wailing, weary cry,
Echo of ill-spent breath,
That wanders yet beneath the sky;
Sad monotone, its key a sigh,
Nor finds relief in death.

"Torn" hath a fiercer cry of pain;
Its jangled lute unstrung,
Never to quiver a trill again,
Or fall in music's silver rain
Where happy songs are sung.

"Worn" shows a wan and weary face,
Its eyes tear-stained and dim—
No roses in the roses' place,
Dim lines of care o'er lines of grace,
The hopeless mouth grown grim.

"Torn" brings the madman's gleaming eye
Ablaze with sullen light;
The ebbing blood shows purple streak
Adown the swiftly faded cheek,
And parted lips are white.

"Weary and worn"—"tempted and torn!"
Listen how echoes wait
On each, to chime its own refrain,
Its burden born of sin or pain,
Sequence inviolate.

* * *

AULD LANG SYNE.

BY ANNA SHEILDS.

"How oddly things come about," Mrs. Marshall said, coming into the room where her sister and two daughters were busily engaged in the manufacture of two elaborate evening dresses.

"A deep and philosophical remark, mamma," said May Marshall, looking up rather saucily. "Pray what occasioned it?"

"You won't know anything about it," was the reply, "but your Aunt Effie will."

Miss Effie Selwyn looked up in her turn, twisting, as she did so, bright blue ribbon into a tasty knot.

"Mrs. Montgomery has just called," said Mrs. Marshall, "and tells me her brother Harold will be home in time for Mrs. Grant's party."

The knot of blue satin ribbon was suddenly crushed out of all shape by the quick, convulsive grasp of Miss Effie Selwyn's fingers, while about that lady's lips gathered a whiteness and moisture that threatened a fainting fit. For a moment the room looked dark, and the voices sounded far away and indistinct—only for a moment; then she roused herself bravely, to see that her agitation had been unnoticed, and to hear her niece Carrie saying:

"I never knew Mrs. Montgomery had a brother."

"Probably not," said Mrs. Marshall. "He has been in China for— How many years is it, Effie?"

"Twelve."

For her very life Effie could not have spoken more than one word with composure.

"Twelve years!" cried May. "No wonder you think Carrie and I know nothing about him. He must be as old as his sister."

"Let me see: he was about twenty-three when he went away," said Mrs. Marshall musingly. "He is not more than thirty-five. That is still young for a man."

She looked as she spoke at her pretty blooming girls of eighteen and twenty, and vaguely called to mind the stories she had heard of the large fortune Harold Russell had gathered together during his exile. Then she gave herself a little mental shake, thinking:

"Pshaw! I am not going to turn into a manœuvring mother yet!" and taking a needle, also engaged in the work of ball-dress making.

For Mrs. Grant's party was to be an event in the quiet little town of Heydon, the hostess residing in the largest and most stately mansion, and opening upon gala nights a long wide ball-room that was the delight of dancing feet. She had a music room, a conservatory, a card room, a library and a drawing-room upon the same floor; so that her parties offered such facilities as were nowhere else attainable in Heydon, for dancing, music, whist, flirtations and conversations.

The Misses Marshall, brightest of blondes, were to appear at the coming festival in clouds of white tulle with blue trimmings, and the multitudinous skirts, puffs and ruffles demanded by fashion required busy stitching for weary hours beforehand. Miss Selwyn had also been bidden to the party, but "Aunt Effie never went anywhere," the girls said, so there was no dress preparing for her adornment.

As her needle went in and out, through cloudy tulle and lustrous satin, Effie Selwyn thought:

"Coming home! Home to what? Does he bring a wife from the far-away land of his long sojourn? or will he choose one here, among the fair young girls of his own country? Oh the bitter folly of the past! May and Carrie are now as light-hearted and gay as I was, when Harold Russell and I clasped hands, with a promise to be all and all each to the other. Only one little week of happiness, and he left me. How long was it? A year, two years, before I knew that he thought me false to him, never guessing that it was Kate's betrothed husband he saw me greet so warmly, when I never guessed he was near. A brother's caress and kiss worked all the misery. Poor sister Kate, she never knew the anguish her handsome lover caused me. Well, they are far away, happy in their Southern home, and I— What of me? Can it be that I am so foolish as to think the old days can ever come again? If Harold Russell loves now, it will be some brilliant girl, not the faded shadow of his old love! Yet—yet—"

"Effie, I have asked you three times where the blonde lace is," cried Mrs. Marshall. "What are you dreaming about?"

"What, indeed!" Effie thought bitterly, and roused herself to the consideration of the relative merits of puffs and ruffles again.

The eventful evening came at last, and the girls were shut up in their room untwisting wonderful crimps, and otherwise preparing for conquest. Mrs. Marshall was likewise engaged in toilet mysteries, and wondering rather impatiently why Effie's skillful fingers were not, as usual, placed at her service.

In her own room, with the door securely fastened, Effie Selwyn was, she said in her own heart, "making a goose" of herself.

A very fair and satisfactory goose she made, as her preparations were completed, though her own criticism was not complimentary.

"I am but a faded old maid, after all."

Was she? Her thirty years of peaceful life, with only one heart struggle, had left her face as smooth as in girlhood. Blooming she had never been, her oval face having a soft, creamy complexion that was seldom flushed with color, though its exquisite fairness was never pallor. Her delicate straight nose, small sweet mouth, even white teeth, and large soft brown eyes, were as attractive as ever; and the rich brown hair, dressed now in Pompadour rolls, was bright in its glossy waves as it had been twelve years ago. She wore a dress of violet silk that left her round white arms and shoulders uncovered, and fitted her tall, slender figure to perfection. There was none of the fashionable puffings and trimmings about her, but an overskirt of rich black lace relieved the plain skirt of silk. She wore no jewels, but in her hair were twisted sprays of starry white flowers and a few violets.

"Considering it is twelve years since I wore this dress and flowers, I do not look so very antiquated. A train is always a train, and I suppose the overskirt modernizes it," thought Effie.

Then she went to a box hidden away in her bureau drawer, and from its most secret corner she took a ring, wrapped carefully in soft cotton.

"Dare I?" she whispered, turning it round under the gas-light, and showing the device, an enamelled violet, with a flashing diamond for its heart.

"Will he despise me if I put it on?" she thought. "Will he think I am too easily won back again? Should I despise the hasty judgment that led him to condemn me unheard, twelve long, long years ago?"

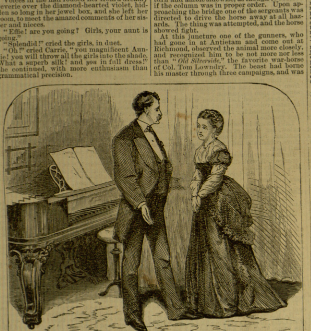
She hesitated some moments, then put the ring upon the fore-finger of her left hand, turning it so that the violet was hidden, and only a plain gold band seemed added to her other rings.

Voices in the hall roused her from a dreamy reverie over the diamond-hearted violet, hidden so long in her jewel box, and she left her room, to meet the amazed comments of her sister and nieces.

"Effie! are you going? Girls, your aunt is going."

"Splendid!" cried the girls, in duet.

"Oh!" cried Carrie, "you magnificent Auntie! you will throw all the girls into the shade. What a superb silk! and *you* in full dress!" she continued, with more enthusiasm than grammatical precision.



"Where did you dig up that violet silk?" asked Mrs. Marshall. "I thought its glories had departed years ago. Do you remember the evening you wore it, when papa gave Kate her first party?"

"I remember," Effie said, in a low voice.

"And James did not come till everybody was going, on account of the train being delayed. We older ones were half angry that Kate was actually engaged before she was even introduced into society. How we laughed because James met you first, and gave you such a rapturous brotherly embrace. Heigh-ho! We are getting old folks now, Effie."

"Mamma," cried May, "Aunt Effie is not so old as you are?"

"Not by ten years," said Mrs. Marshall; "but we seem nearer of an age when we look at you."

The evening was half gone, and Effie had only seen at a distance the tall figure and handsome face of the hero of the evening. As the brother of the popular Mrs. Montgomery, as a reputed millionaire, as one who had been twelve years in China, Mr. Harold Russell was forced to submit to being lionized. He was much altered, Effie thought; contrasting the dignified bearing and grave face with the sunny-faced, impulsive young man who had been her lover in past years. Yet, as the hours flew by, she caught herself recognizing certain expressions of the dark eyes, the mobile mouth, certain inflections of the deep, manly voice; and once her heart beat tumultuously, as a familiar laugh rang out upon the air.

It was by her own movements that she prevented the recognition she dreaded, while she longed to have it over. More than once she had screened herself from a tall figure approaching the place where she stood, and more than once the violet silk had flitted into another room, just as Harold Russell thought he could touch it.

There had been much dancing, much flirting, and many games of whist, when a small party of music lovers collected round the grand piano, begging Miss Selwyn to sing. It was well known that she had a splendid voice carefully educated, and she so seldom appeared in society that there was no escape now from the pressing importunities of her friends.

"Just one song, Miss Selwyn," Mrs. Grant herself entreated. "There are so many anxious to hear you."

Very reluctantly the lady drew off her white gloves and seated herself before the piano. The group around her listened for the usual brilliant prelude, and an elaborate and difficult "show off" song, but after a moment of silence the little hands struck two rich, full chords. A moment she paused then, to steady the trembling heart; then, in a clear, sweet voice, she sang the opening verse of "Auld Lang Syne." The listeners were surprised for a second, then touched by the power and sweetness of the voice singing the old song, familiar to all. The second verse was sung, when close beside the singer a deep bass voice joined in the chorus.

Quick crimson flushes passed over Effie's cheek, but she sang steadily, at every chorus the voice she knew so well joining her own. Nobody else noticed it, but with each verse these voices, so long estranged, grew stronger, clearer, more jubilant, till with the last one the spirit seized them all, and a deafening chorus of the company closed the song.

They drifted away, broke up into couples and groups, while Harold Russell, affecting to turn over some music, said, in a low voice:

"Can we indeed be as in Auld Lang Syne, Effie? Can you forgive me?"

For answer she slowly turned the ring upon her finger until he recognized the device he had chosen for her twelve years ago.

"Mamma," May Marshall whispered, "do you see Aunt Effie dancing with Mr. Russell? I do not see one young couple so handsome and distinguished looking as they are."

A sudden memory flashed over Mrs. Marshall.

"The last time Effie wore that violet silk," she thought, "she danced with Harold Russell, and the next thing we heard of him he was on his way to China. I remember now, Effie soon after began to withdraw from society. I wonder—"

Here her meditations were interrupted by the people in question.

"Mrs. Marshall," the gentleman said, "have you no welcome for me? I ask for one as a 'man and a brother.'"

"You shall have it, though Effie has told me nothing in your absence."

"There was nothing to tell. We have only to-night renewed the—the—"

"The vows," said the gentleman gayly, "of Auld Lang Syne."

ANECDOTE OF A HORSE.

One day last summer the Wellburg Artillery was out for parade. The company was full, and Day's Military Band was in attendance with its inspiriting music. The battery, of four brass guns, had seen service, and many of the men had "fought mit Sigel" in the Valley. As the company was passing down toward the river, an old horse came bounding into the road from an adjacent pasture, and having stood for a brief space watching the panoplied column, he trotted to the front and took position ahead of the band. He tried to get in between the band and the line, but was kept out. At the head of the whole, however, he gained his place, and there he tramped and strutted with all the pomp and dignity of a commander in full feather. Several attempts were made to drive him away, but without avail. At times he marched straight ahead, with tail and head erect, and anon he would turn and amble sidewise, as though to observe if the column was in proper order. Upon approaching the bridge one of the sergeants was directed to drive the horse away at all hazards. The thing was attempted, and the horse showed fight.

At this juncture one of the gunners, who had gone in at Antietam and come out at Richmond, observed the animal more closely, and recognized him to be not more nor less than "*Old Silverside*," the favorite war-horse of Col. Tom Lowndry. The beast had borne his master through three campaigns, and was now cherished for the good he had done. When this had been discovered three rousing cheers were given for the grand old horse, and the equine veteran, well used to the cheers, gave a jubilant neigh in response, and then set himself for resuming the march. And he held his place at the head of the column through the remainder of the day, and not a man of the company turned to the right, or to the left, or halted, or marched, more promptly at the word of command, than did Old Silverside. C.

* * *

SCIENCE.

Almost every year the University boat races between Oxford and Cambridge in England, and Harvard and Yale in this country, lead to animated discussion, by medical and other journals, of the effects, injurious or otherwise, superinduced by severe athletic exercises. In reference to this subject, *Land and Water* states that the life rates and vitality of any given number of well-known rowing men are larger than if struck from any ordinary average of men, and mentions a number of famous crews of past years, many members of which are still alive—among them the celebrated Guards' six-oar crew, which rowed from Oxford to London in one day, four of whom are living, the other two having been killed in the Crimean war. The writer concludes by an expression of regret that men of science should so often argue upon unfounded statistics, when treating of athletic pursuits.

A very interesting case of the successful transfusion of blood from one person to another is described by Professor Jurgeson of Berlin, in a recent number of a medical journal published in that city. His patient was a man twenty-eight years of age, who had been poisoned by phosphorus, having taken a solution of the ignition mass of eight bundles of matches, on the ninth of December. On the 11th of February, the activity of the heart having been excited by champagne, a transfusion of 580 cubic centimetres of blood, which had just been taken from three persons in good health, was effected, into a vein of the arm, 500 cubic centimetres of the patient's own blood being at the same time taken from an artery. An improvement in his condition at once set in, and he was able to leave his bed early in March.

A suggestion that opium and other sedative drugs which are extensively used in the treatment of insanity may be productive of eventual evil rather than good, comes from Dr. Maudsley, a well-known English physician, who quotes Dr. Clouston on the use of opium in asylums, to the effect that it "soon lost its effect; all the patients lost weight while taking it; their average temperature fell; the pulse was lowered; and in all cases it interfered with the proper nutrition of the body, and pushed it one step further down hill in the direction of death."

Sir Charles Lyell, writing of the recent discoveries made by means of sea dredging, expresses the opinion that the extreme cold found to exist at great depths of the ocean is not due to mere distance from the surface. Thus at Aden, on the Indian ocean, the water can come only from the heated regions of the Southern hemisphere; yet the soundings there indicate that portions, at least, of the equatorial seas are traversed at considerable depths by continuous currents, the temperature of which but slightly exceeds thirty-two degrees Fahrenheit.

Mr. W. Gifford Palgrave, the Arabian traveller, has discovered evidence of ancient glacial action in that part of Asia Minor known as Northeastern Anatolia. He found a great bar of loose water-worn stones, unlike the rocks of the neighboring district, piled up to a height of from fifty to sixty feet, and stretching two-thirds of the way across the valley of the river Pyxartes. This deposit must have been made during that early epoch when the whole region was covered with snow and glaciers.

Among the interesting discoveries of fossils recently made in the Western States, those of the expedition under Prof. O. C. Marsh of Yale College have been the most important. Gigantic flying reptiles once inhabited the districts of Western Kansas which this party explored; and the fossil remains of a hitherto unknown species which they discovered, called the great pterodactyl, show that the creature probably measured nearly twenty-two feet between the tips of his wings, when they were fully expanded.

English mining engineers regard it as extremely desirable to dispense with the use of gunpowder in coal-mines, as far as possible, inasmuch as fire-damp explosions are frequently caused by the blasting; and Mr. W. Firth of Leeds, England, offers a premium of five hundred pounds sterling for the best coal-cutting machine, with compressed air as the motive power, which is adapted for working seams of coal and iron-stone.

Much dissatisfaction has been expressed by botanists, and in scientific circles generally, throughout the country, at the dismissal of Dr. C. C. Parry from his position as botanist to the Department of Agriculture at Washington. *It is asserted to have been without even a plausible reason, and the editors of Silliman's Journal characterize it* as a "petty and truly pitiful business."

Professor Tyndall, in the first lecture of his present course at the Royal Institution, illustrated his remarks on condensation by relating how snow once fell inside the Winter Palace at St. Petersburgh, because the cold outer air was suddenly admitted into a heated ball-room, the atmosphere of which was charged with aqueous vapor.

NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Unhappy (Baltimore) says: "In my girlhood I learned to love and look for *Ledger* day, and when I had a home of my own the *Ledger* was welcomed as a dear old friend. Well, I am about to take the privilege of an old friend to ask your advice, as I am in deep sorrow. I have a husband, who is, I believe, devotedly attached to me; he is thoughtful of and kind to me, is a tender and affectionate father, and provides for his family as well as his means will allow; but—ah, that there should be a but!—the one bitter drop in my cup of happiness is, he uses the most profane language when excited. I have remonstrated, entreated, and tried by every means in my power to break up this pernicious habit, but in vain. Our children notice it, and often my heart is wrung to hear them make use of words which they hear him say. What can I do? I was taught so different by my parents. He never swore in my presence before we were married, and when I tell him how much he has altered, he tells me that it only makes him worse to scold—to let him alone. My tears serve to make matters worse. Now, must I have my children learn this soul-destroying habit, and have their young minds poisoned by this evil? How can I tell my children that God will punish those who take his holy name in vain, when their father daily makes use of just such language as I tell them they must not? I have come to you for advice. My parents are dead, and I could not go to my relatives on either side with this sorrow. I will look for your answer impatiently, for I believe it will be given impartially and kindly." Your case is very trying, and you need tact, patience and wisdom. If you are a Christian woman, you know whence to seek the needed help. You must continue to show your husband, without irritating him, how much his habit grieves you and injures his children. Do not despair of success in the end. You must tell your children the truth about a practice which is not only profane, but is happily becoming the mark of the vulgar and coarse. If your husband is not radically bad, he will be moved in the end by a regard for his children's welfare, and will shake off this degrading and corrupting vice.

Inquisitive (Philadelphia) says: "Having read your excellent paper for the past four years, I take the liberty of troubling you to answer me a few questions. Having seen the picture of Beatrice Cenci frequently, and having no person who could tell me who she was, I appeal to you, hoping you will do so; also, who Dolly Varden, the person whom they name the spring style of dress goods after, is." Beatrice Cenci is known as "the beautiful parricide." She was the daughter of Francesco Cenci, a Roman nobleman of vast wealth and atrocious character, who lived in the latter part of the sixteenth century. Francesco married a second wife, after which he treated his children by his first wife—of whom Beatrice was one—in the most abominable manner. His conduct to Beatrice at last became too horrible for description in these columns, and it is alleged that she, her step-mother, and one of her brothers named Giacomo, planned and executed the murder of her unnatural parent. The crime was discovered, and the brother and sister were put to the torture. It is said that Giacomo confessed the crime, but that Beatrice persisted in her innocence. The step-mother was not tortured. They were all three executed, in August, 1599. Some historians deny that Beatrice and her brother had anything to do with the murder of Francesco, but that they were the victims of a fiendish plot. Dolly Varden is the name of one of the heroines in *Barnaby Rudge*, one of Dickens' novels.

Winnie L. says: "I have read the *Ledger* for a great many years, and now venture to trouble you with something that I am greatly perplexed about. I hope you will consider it worthy of an answer in your correspondent column. I am sixteen years of age, and live at home with my father, who is a widower. I often wish for a mother, for I have no one to go to for advice or counsel, as my father does not like to have me trouble him with my affairs. I being the only daughter, and 'lady of the house,' go in company a great deal, and I have to depend solely on my own judgment and discernment in choosing my associates. I would like to ask you what you think of a gentleman who, after a pleasant acquaintance of a few weeks, made me a present of the book 'Strathmore,' by 'Ouida?' Is it a proper book for him to give me, and would a gentleman of refinement and culture call it 'splendid?' If it is not, shall I send it back, telling him so, or take no further notice of it whatever?" Winnie L. had better show this book to her father, and have his advice. She has our authority to show to her father our decided opinion that a father can have no more important work on earth than to guide and protect his only and motherless daughter.

A Woman's Righter (Windsor, Can.) "having seen in a newspaper that over a hundred young ladies were studying law in the United States, wishes to know if there is any preparatory school to be attended first, or if they can be admitted by merely studying in a lawyer's office. Would also like to be favored with a few of the Editor's views on the subject, and to know whether any book has been printed, and where and at what price it can be procured. Hoping to receive an immediate answer, as my time is precious, and trusting you will not throw this aside, I end by thanking you for the good advice I receive through your valuable paper." We are not aware of any book on the subject of which our amiable correspondent writes—which we presume is her meaning, though her language admits of a wider construction—nor of any uniform law of admission to the bar in the United States. Our time also being of some value, we decline spreading out the "views" we have—and they are numerous and varied—in the hope that some of them may be on the topic in our young friend's eager mind, though not clearly in her letter.

Finance (New Chicago, Kansas) says, quoting a country newspaper "gold report" of April 17: "In the inclosed report, cut from a daily paper, will you please explain the meaning of the sentence, 'Loans five and a half to *flat for carrying*.' Also the meaning of 'Clearings $61,000,000?' By so doing you will oblige a constant reader of your valuable paper." Men frequently want money for a day or two, and yet not as a permanent loan. Others have it on hand, and do not wish to invest it for any length of time. So they accommodate one another, through gold brokers. The rate for it is indicated as from five and a half to a shade lower. Many transactions are made in a day where no money passes from buyer to seller, as in railway and other bonds, bank stocks, and so on. Reports of these are made at the clearing house, and checks exchanged daily, and of course the amount of these "clearings" represents approximately the amount of business done, outside the gold exchange and produce exchange. As the paragraph is entitled "gold report," possibly the reference is here to the *gold exchange*, though other matters are included.

Lillie M. (New York) says: "Would you be kind enough to tell me where I could find some work to do? I will tell you how I am situated, and why I desire it. At present I am in New York, and studying music. I have a great deal of leisure, and would like to occupy all spare moments and to earn money, so as to avoid being so dependent upon others, and particularly to avoid being so expensive to mother, for we are rather poor. Please also to suggest some kind to me, and say too if you think 'copying' would be good, and the wages generally received for such work." Employments vary with tastes and education. Teaching music and other branches, needlework, machine-working, copying, book-keeping, authorship, lecturing, are all tried by females, and often with great success, to say nothing of the professions. The rates of remuneration vary greatly with the aptitudes of the laborers, and in ignorance of your special capacity, it is impossible to be explicit. You show a good spirit. Persevere.

Nellie S. says: "Will you please inform me what would be an appropriate acknowledgment of a serenade given to several ladies? And if proper to throw out a card, what would be appropriate to write? And please tell me in what way a lady should introduce herself on calling upon strangers. You will greatly oblige a subscriber by answering immediately through your paper." We think the several ladies must determine first whether it is to them collectively or individually, and act accordingly. We cannot think what the ladies should do. A gentleman turns out on the balcony and makes a speech, wise or otherwise, as the case may be. Should a card be thrown out—we do not recommend it—a suitable message might be found in a little modification of the nursery poem:

"Hush, my babe, lie still and slumber."

A lady can introduce herself by sending in her card.

A Boy of Sixteen says: "I have just arrived at my sixteenth birthday, and have decided to become an architect, as well as a sensible man. Now what studies do you advise me to pursue to prepare myself for the above profession? And what books would you advise me to read, to become a well-informed man? By answering the above questions you will greatly oblige a boy of sixteen." One can best become a well-informed man by availing himself of the classes of a first-rate College. You can give particular attention to mathematics, and such other departments as bear upon your future profession. Having graduated, enter the office of a first-rate architect, and you will be put in the way of the authorities on architecture.

E. H. (Brier Creek) says: "One of my friends and I having fallen into a dispute not long since, we agreed to leave the matter to you to answer, through the columns of the *Ledger*. The dispute was as follows: I told him that there was a New York county as well as a New York city and State, but he insisted that there was no New York county at all in the State of New York, or anywhere else, as far as that was concerned. By answering this in the next number of your *Ledger*, you will greatly oblige." There is a New York county, of which New York city is the capital. The limits of the city and county are co-extensive, comprising the whole island of Manhattan.

W. (Saratoga) writes: "I saw in the dear old *Ledger* 'What a Good Wife Thinks about It.' I have been married for eight years, and have tried every way in my power to please my husband, and help him, but can never succeed. If I meet him with a smile, he will say, 'What ails you? What are you grinning at now?' What shall I do next? To say I am discouraged and disheartened is all I can do. Please advise me." Your husband is a brute. He deserves to be taken by a lion tamer and cudgelled until he learns to behave better. It may be, however, that he is insane. That is the most charitable view that can be taken of his barbarous conduct.

C. P. R. (Cincinnati, O.) says: "Please tell me, in your correspondence column, what books to get in order to learn about Japan. Is there anything as yet published that is reliable about that country? I should like to know all about the Japanese Government, their religion, social habits, etc. You can probably refer me to works of which I have not as yet heard, having read nothing, so to speak, of that curious and interesting people." See "Liebold's Japan and Japanese in the 19th century."

T. F. (Michigan) asks: "What would you think of a gentleman if he had called on a lady very often, and then had asked to marry her, and did not call again in three or four weeks?" It would depend very much on what she said in reply. If she said Yes, we should think it strange. If she said No, we should think it natural.

Constant Reader (Norfolk, Va.) says: "I have found such valuable information in your answers to correspondents that I cannot refrain from confiding to you and asking your advice on a matter in which I feel most intensely interested. I am twenty-four years old, and profess to be of a philosophic turn of mind, and believe that I have never yet experienced love as I have heard and read of it, although I am not positively assured that such is the case. Three years ago I met a young lady, and enjoyed her society for a year afterward, who is physically my opposite, and whom I admire for her gentle and unobtrusive demeanor, her pure and pious example, and who I think would love me, but she lacks that force of spirit and talkativeness that I so much admire in a woman. I have never professed to her that I loved her, but she has shown unmistakable signs of esteem (or love) for me. I want to marry. I do not feel satisfied in my present condition. Being of a sympathetic nature, I long for some one to love, and when I think of married life as compared with the life I now live, my thoughts seem to associate *her* with my ideal of a future companion. I think of her every day, and yet I cannot persuade myself that I love her as I should. I am in trouble, and if you will please be kind enough to tell me what to do under the circumstances, and to answer through the columns of your excellent paper, you will greatly relieve and more than oblige." The philosophers always puzzle us—and themselves; and they are never more unintelligible than when in love. You doubt if you love enough. Do philosophers ever love enough? Is love consistent with the true philosophic temper? She is quiet—the very quality for a philosopher's wife. A woman of spirit would often be obliged to tell her philosopher too plain truths—*e. g.*, Xantippe and Socrates. Next to a good talker is a good listener, and that is exactly what was most agreeable to all the philosophers we have met. Propose at once; and if we may venture a suggestion to a philosopher, propose not as a philosopher, but as a man.

Mrs. C. L. (Osage) says: "As my husband and myself have been having an argument about sisterly duty, and as we cannot agree, he has promised to leave it with you to decide; so I will tell you the whole story, that you may decide the more readily. It is this: I am next to the youngest of a family of fourteen children. My father and mother are both dead, and there are only five of us children living. Out of seven brothers I have but two left—both older than myself. My brother A lives within a mile of us, while my brother B, whom I have not seen for nearly ten years, lives in Maine, on the old homestead. The trouble is this: About eighteen months before my father died, he gave half his farm to my brother B, by his signing an agreement to pay myself and youngest sister fifty dollars apiece on the day we were married, we being the only unmarried girls. After I had been married about six months, I wrote very pleasantly to my brother for the money. On receiving no answer, I wrote again, thinking perhaps he did not receive my first letter, but with the same result. He wrote my brother A, telling him to say to me that he had answered my letter, and that he would pay me as soon as he sold his oxen. I began to think that he did not intend to pay me, for how should he know but what I got his letter, if he wrote one? And I got vexed, and sent a power of attorney to my brother-in-law to collect the fifty dollars for me, which he did. That was more than eight years ago. I have since written to my brother B and to his wife a good sisterly letter, but have never received any answer. A few weeks ago my brother A received a letter from my brother B, and he inquired very kindly after me. Now, I feel as though, if I should write to him, I would get an answer, and I want to write, but my husband says I should only be making a fool of myself, but is willing to abide by your decision. Please give me an answer in your next paper, and oblige an old reader." Our advice is that you write an affectionate, sisterly letter to your brother. He would probably answer it; but if he should not, you would be none the worse off for having written it.

B. G. (Geneva) says: "In a recent number of your paper, I noticed a sketch from a lady touching on the unhappiness of wives, and it then occurred to me that I would like to state my case to you. I am engaged to a young lady, who has most excellent good sense. But I am uneasy about one thing, namely, she has been talked to by several married women, who urge her not to marry, and who deplore their ill-fortune in marrying, and close by saying that if they had their lives to live over, they would never marry. My affianced tells me of these occasions when they happen, and I think she fears to enter into a married state. I have requested her to withdraw from the engagement, if she so desires; but she expresses implicit faith in my making her happy. But I do not profess to be any better than other men, nor any more able to make a wife happy than other husbands are. Now, I do not want to make a woman unhappy, nor be made unhappy myself, but I believe I should be as happy with the lady aforementioned as it is possible for me to be. I am strongly tempted not to marry at all, and were it not for the injustice and harm I would do my betrothed, I would break the engagement and crush my love. Tell me what to do. If you think I will make her more unhappy by marrying her than by not, I will choose the less evil. I have thought of it so much that it has about made me sick of thinking." Leave the decision of the matter to the young lady herself; and should it result in marriage, do not trouble yourselves about making one another happy, but go to work to do your respective duties faithfully in all respects, and happiness will follow. Happiness is the fragrance of the flower of duty, and no one can have the fragrance unless he first cultivates the flower.

Pittsburgh says: "I write you for advice in the columns of the *Ledger*, of which I am a faithful reader. I have two boys, aged ten and twelve. They have had an average chance at schooling, but are very backward, the oldest never having studied anything higher than mental arithmetic, primary geography, and spelling, and has never been further than division in arithmetic. I try to teach them evenings all I can, and explain to them the advantage of having a good education; but the most they think of is play. If they study at all, it is only to hurry through, so as to get to their play. They attend school regularly, and we are able to give them a good education, if they will only learn. They are not dull children at anything else. The oldest commits to memory very easily, when he will apply himself. I am very much worried on account of their slowness, and ask you if you think they will ever have a good education. I would far rather they would have that than a fortune. My husband has no time to attend to them; in fact, he seldom sees them except at meal-time. Can you suggest any way that I can interest my children in the path of learning?" You seem to be doing the best thing that can be done. You must not expect too much of such young children. Your boys will be pretty sure to come out all right. With such a devoted mother, it is hardly possible that they should not make fair progress in their studies as they grow older.

Bessie F. L. (Syracuse) says: "Having been a constant reader of the *Ledger* for the last nine years, I have volunteered to ask your advice on a certain subject. I have a lover whom I do not love, and who, on account of my refusal of his hand, has taken to drinking. He says he will reform if I accept him. Now, dear *Ledger*, do you think I ought to sacrifice my own happiness to save him from ruin? Also, would you place any faith in such a promise? Please answer in your next, as I shall await your answer with great anxiety." We have known ladies take it as a compliment that men went to ruin in such disappointment. If the fact be so in any case, it argues a head so weak and a nature so misguided, that one could not tell to what the next disappointment would lead. The first baby, for example, may be a girl, instead of a "son and heir," and he may take to drink again, or to gambling. The reform of such a man by marriage is doubtful; and it is certain you have no right to marry a man whom you do not love.

H. B., who is an English woman of a speculative turn of mind, says: "Hydrophobia is not incurable. I know a certain cure, and will guarantee its efficacy. What will the medical men of this great country give for the knowledge? As to my responsibility, I will say that I am the sister of three medical men, and the aunt of two, who all got their diplomas at the London University, England, and are the first medical men now in the towns where they reside." The medical men of this great country would not give you one cent for your alleged remedy for hydrophobia, notwithstanding your handsome offer to guarantee its efficacy. The fact of your being sister and aunt to so much medical talent will not weigh a farthing with the physicians. If anything, it will prejudice them against your remedy, as they will naturally suppose that if it really were what you say it is, you would desire to let your extraordinary family have the management of it.

J. G. J. (Pittsburg) says: "Will you please answer me in your valuable paper the following question? As much depends on your decision, you will please not cast this in your waste basket. The following is the question: If an unmarried lady addresses a query to a gentleman, and he does not understand her, and wishes a repetition of the query, is it proper for him to say Ma'am? My opponents say it is vulgar, incorrect, etc. Please give us your opinion, and oblige." Persons do not always discriminate in the use of Ma'am—the contracted form of Madam—between the married and the unmarried. Without declaring a person who would say "Ma'am" in the circumstances necessarily vulgar, it is safe to decide that a person of culture would say, "I beg your pardon," or "Please repeat your question," and so indicate his desire to hear the question distinctly.

Moral Justice says: "Will you please answer the following questions: Has an artist a right to paint a life-size picture of a young lady from a photograph or from memory, without the knowledge or consent of the young lady or her parents? Has he a right to hang the picture up in a public place, when it is a disgrace to the lady it represents? Is it right for the man in whose house it hangs, to let it remain after he has been asked to take it down by the lady?" We answer all these questions in the negative. An artist has no business to paint a portrait of a young lady, and expose it to view or sell it, without the consent of herself and her parents. Nor has a man a right to keep such a picture, painted under such circumstances, on exhibition, against the wishes of the party whom it caricatures.

F. H. F. says: "I am at present engaged in a business that requires the use of four large show-cases. In the showing of goods, the wood work of the show-cases has necessarily become very much disfigured by scratches, etc. Now what I would like to ask of you is some recipe, if there is such a thing, by which I could effectually remove the scratches and disfigurements. By telling me what to do, you will greatly oblige an old subscriber." The disfigurements will have to be removed by scraping or sand-papering, and revarnishing. Ask some furniture dealer or cabinet maker how you can renovate your show-cases with the least trouble and expense, and he will doubtless give you the desired information in a practical way.

A School-boy (Quincy, Ill.) says: "Will you please tell me what a mongoose is? I have endeavored to find out, but cannot do so." A mon-goose, or man-goose, is a little animal which is described as "a sort of monkey." It is native to the East Indies, and is the deadly foe of the cobra.

*** *Several letters stand over to be answered in our next.*